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GROWTH IN GRACE

And other Sermons

BY THE LATE

W. C. MAGEE D.D.

LORD ARCHBISHOP OF YORK, AUTHOR OF "THE GOSPEL AND THE AGE"

EDITED BY

CHARLES S. MAGEE

Barrister-at-Law



NEW YORK

THOMAS WHITTAKER

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In these sermons, which he never published, many who have delighted in one or other of them, and many more who had never the opportunity of delighting in the mellow ring of that free and noble speech, will rejoice to learn something of its wisdom, its vigour, its exactitude and its tenderness.

EDW: CANTUAR:

PREFACE.

IN selecting the following sermons for publication I have confined myself to those which have been revised, to some extent at least, by the author. They do not contain, it is impossible that they should contain, the *ipsissima verba* of the preacher, for, as he himself has pointed out in the preface to "The Gospel and the Age"—"the preacher of what are called extempore sermons—that is to say, sermons not read from manuscript, but delivered from brief notes—cannot reproduce them in print unless they happen to have been taken down at the time by a reporter. Such reports can hardly ever be *verbatim*, and are for the most part more or less imperfect and inaccurate. The process of re-

vising them and of supplying their omissions, with a view to publication, is not an easy one, even when attempted after the lapse of a few days—still less so after that of years; and its results are seldom quite satisfactory either to the author or the reader. A sermon thus patched and mended has neither the freshness and point of the extempore nor the smoothness and sustained thought of the written composition. It is neither a religious speech, which the extempore sermon ought to be—nor a religious essay, which the written sermon ought to be; and it runs the risk of uniting the defects of both styles with the merits of neither. . . .”

This fact, which rendered it difficult for the preacher himself to give to the world the sermons as originally delivered, makes it impossible for an editor to do so. Nevertheless, though I feel that there is much in this volume that the author would have wished corrected, some passages even which may misrepresent what was actually said, still I have felt it due to his memory and to the public to utilise what material I possess, and to publish what must be imperfect, and may be inaccurate, rather than suppress what is valuable.

Those who have heard the Archbishop preach will realise how far the written words fall short of the spoken ones, and how much is now lost by the fact that Dr. Magee's sermons were purely extempore.

C. S. M.

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GROWTH IN GRACE.

GROWTH IN GRACE.

PREACHED IN THE CHURCH OF ST. MARY-THE-VIRGIN, OXFORD, ON
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25, 1863.

“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour,
Jesus Christ.”—2 PETER III. 18.

THE Christian life, like the Christian faith from which it springs, is a great mystery. It is, indeed, but a part of that one great “mystery of godliness” which that faith reveals; for it, too, is a manifestation of “God in the flesh.” Every renewed man is a real revelation of God. “God dwelleth” in him and “he in God;” and the Divine and indwelling Spirit reveals Himself in and by him to the world. “I in them and Thou in Me, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me,” are the words in which our Lord sets forth the deep mystery of the Divine life in the soul of man. Not in figure or in metaphor, but in truest and most awful reality are we made, by our living union with Christ, “partakers of a Divine nature,”—a nature which displays itself in words and works that are human, and yet that are also super-human,—in a life which is that of a man, and yet which is life in God and with God.

Such a life is a great mystery. It presents, though in an infinitely lower degree, that difficulty which the idea of the Incarnation presents to our minds, the difficulty of conceiving of any real union of the human and the

Divine ; any union, that is, of God and Man, in which God shall still be truly and perfectly God, and Man truly and perfectly Man. However we may succeed in defining this idea in words, we find it all but impossible to realize it in thought. The moment we attempt to do so it escapes from us, and we find ourselves excluding the thought of what is human, that we may realize the idea of the Divine ; or excluding the thought of the Divine, that we may realize the idea of what is human. We never can contemplate long that "strange sight," humanity indwelt by the Divine glory, without imagining that the inferior nature is consumed, or at least in some measure lost in the higher, the finite in the Infinite, the creature in the Creator, or without being tempted to doubt if the glory that we see be indeed the presence of the very God of Heaven.

Such we know has been the history of the doctrine of the Incarnation. We know how, ever as men insisted on the truth of our Lord's Divinity, they were almost insensibly led into denying, or forgetting, the truth of His humanity ; or as they asserted the reality of His human nature, they were led into denial or forgetfulness of His Divine nature. And as with the idea of the Incarnate Word, so with the idea of the written Word : here, too, we have a union of the Divine and of the human, a Word that is God's Word, and yet that is also the word of man. And we know only too well how some have insisted on the Divine authorship of this Word, until it ceased for them to have in any real sense a human authorship, until Prophet and Apostle were no longer men "moved by the Holy Ghost," but masks through which passed a voice not their own. And we know how others, revolting against this false conception of it, have insisted on the evident proofs of its human authorship, until they have come to deny that God is in any real and distinctive sense its

Author too. And as with the idea of the incarnate Christ and the inspired Word, so with the idea of the Christian life. It, too, as we have seen, has its Divine and its human element, and it in like manner has been distorted by one-sided attempts to bring out either of these ideas to the exclusion of the other. We know how one school of writers dwell almost exclusively on the Divine and supernatural aspect of this life, until its natural and human aspect vanishes almost entirely from their descriptions of it; until it becomes an utterly unnatural and unreal state, in which man is seen the mere passive instrument of a creating and controlling Omnipotence.

By such teachers the science of the Divine life is and must be almost entirely neglected. They treat mainly of its first beginnings, or its more marked and striking crises when the Divine power is most startlingly manifested, and the soul may be seen stirred to its depths by the power of the Spirit. They would fain dwell always on the Mount of Transfiguration, or in the chamber of Pentecost, where the Divine Presence is seen in rays of glory or in tongues of fire; but they seem to shun the lower paths of daily life, in which the Christian seems to walk only with the common light upon his path, and to speak the common speech of men. And the natural and necessary result of this exaggerated and one-sided statement of the great doctrines of grace has been as violent and one-sided a reaction against them. Men have wearied of what seemed to them the unreality of such a religion; they have sickened of what they call its cant expressions, in which every word seems to lose its natural meaning and acquire some strange new one; they have insisted that man is something more than a machine; they have claimed for his reason and for his heart their place in the work of his own reformation; they have asserted for human life in this world its real

worth and dignity. But they have gone beyond all this, and, asserting the human side of Christianity, they have denied the Divine. While proclaiming that the Christian life is not *unnatural*, they have made it no longer *supernatural*; they insist that there is nothing in religion really true or valuable but its moral precepts and its idea of God; they maintain there is nothing that is real in its duties that is not within the reach of all men; that the heathen stands in this respect on a level with the Christian, and that we have but to obey the better instincts of our common nature, and we need no new birth, no higher nature, no divine grace.

Now against both these extreme views, each the exaggeration of a great truth, and each therefore a most dangerous error, the Word of God gives its clear and repeated testimony. In every word which tells us of our state of spiritual death, and of our absolute need of a resurrection and a new birth; in every word which describes that new birth as the work of the quickening Spirit who is "Lord and giver of life;" in every word which describes the newness of that spiritual life in its irreconcilable opposition to the old and fleshly nature which could therefore never have given it birth; in every word which ascribes the first motions of all that is holy in us—the inspiration of every good thought, the awakening of every holy desire, the suggestion of every holy purpose—to an Almighty Spirit dwelling in our spirit, and working in us both to will and do of His good pleasure; in every word which describes that new life as sustained by heavenly and mystic food, not fed "by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God;" in every word which describes the Christian life as a progress from victory to victory over the world, and the flesh, and the devil, all unattainable by the natural powers of the greatest man, all

attainable by the weakest and lowliest possessor of this spiritual nature ; in all these descriptions of this new life, from its birth to its glorious and completed manifestation, the Word of God sets forth for us an existence to which mere human nature, unaided and unchanged, could never reach, of which it could never even conceive ; it testifies of this new creation, as of the old, that it "declares the glory of God and sheweth His handiwork."

But, on the other hand, equally clear, equally full is the testimony of Scripture to the human and the natural aspect of this Christian life. In every word which appeals to our human reason, and pleads with our human affections, and addresses itself to our human sympathies ; in every word which exhorts us to "work out our own salvation with fear and trembling," to "give all diligence to add to our faith" every needed grace ; in every exhortation to heed and watchfulness against all spiritual enemies ; in every call to the use of ordinances ; in every institution and appointment of Christ's Church that makes us dependent for such ordinances on human ministrations ; in every warning against neglect of these, and, above all, in every warning against "resisting," "grieving," "quenching," that very Spirit of God which works in us with all the power of Omnipotence ; in every such word which seems to make us in part authors of our own salvation, and altogether authors of our own destruction, which sets forth the awful power of the human will to shape the destiny of man for good or evil, does Scripture testify that the supernatural element of our new life does not overpower or destroy the natural, and that though God works *in* every renewed man, yet that every such man works also *with* God.

Such opposite statements are for the most part scattered throughout Scripture without any attempt to harmonize

them, or to fit them into any one logical system. They are given us separately, that we may use them each in their turn as we need them; calling to our help in hours of despondency all words that tell us that it is the Most High God who is our Redeemer; calling to mind in our hours of carelessness and presumption all words that speak of our salvation as a gift from Him that we may lose or cast away.

But there are passages in Scripture which bring together in one both these views of the Christian life, which express at once its supernatural and its natural, its human and its divine elements. Such a passage, for instance, as that in which we are bidden to "work out our own salvation," because "it is God that worketh in us to will and to do of His good pleasure." And such a twofold statement is given us in our text.

When the Apostle bids us "grow in grace," he tells us, on the one hand, that our life is from above; that to live it we need a grace—a free and gracious gift from God—a communication to us of "that thing which by nature we cannot have:" but then he bids us see that we "grow in this grace," that is, he tells us that this grace, though miraculous in its origin, is yet subject to natural laws in its progress. It has its growth, its normal and real development: a growth which we may help by our care, or hinder by our neglect, or destroy by our injurious treatment. The analogy here to the growth of the plant or the animal is perfect. The life of any living thing we cannot give. The vital principle that dwells in it is not of our creation. It has God alone for its author. But once that life is begun, once it manifests itself, as all life must, by growth, then we have power over it to shape, direct and improve, or to distort and dwarf or destroy. True it is that the creative power that gave it being at the

first sustains it in all its after growth ; that without this it would not grow : yet it is also true that the supplies of food or culture that are necessary to its growth are left to us to give or to withhold.

And this analogy, so frequent in Scripture, between the life of the soul and that of the plant suggests an answer to the objection that is frequently brought by those who insist upon the irresistible character of Divine grace, that it is surely impossible for man to resist or defeat the purposes of God ; that if His Holy Spirit have begun a work on our spirits, it cannot be that we should have power to prevent the completion of that work. Those who so speak forget that the same might be said of many another work of God. Every seed that He has created is made and designed especially to grow and to bring forth fruit after its kind. And yet we have the power to spoil this work, to frustrate apparently this design of God. The plant which He made to grow we can prevent from growing. The fruit which, according to His plan, it ought to have borne, we can say it shall never bear. And in both cases the answer to this seeming difficulty is the same. It is true that God works in the life of the seed as in that of the soul. It is also true that He has been pleased to set such bounds to the manner of His working that we may help or hinder the growth of either. It is not we who are in either case stronger than God. It is God who has in His original design left these limits within which our power may be exerted, and within which His will shall not overmaster ours.

But if the progress of our spiritual life depends so largely upon ourselves, if we are responsible for our growth or our decline in grace, then it is all important for us to have some standard by which we may measure this growth or this decline, some conception, that is, of

what this life should be in its perfection. Every life tends to complete itself according to its own nature, tends to realise the true and perfect form of itself; and unless we know what that form should be, we cannot know how near it approaches or how far it falls short of this.

Where, then, is the perfect life by which we may measure our imperfections? Where is that form to which all our growth should assimilate us? You do not need, brethren, to be told where we are to find the example of a perfect life. We know that one such, and one alone, stands out among all the records of our race unstained by sin, undimmed by imperfection; the life of Him who "did no sin," and in whose mouth there was "no guile;" the "beloved Son," in whom His Father was "well pleased." And we know that this life is the ideal and the type of our own. It is to this image, faultless and glorious as it is, that we are "predestined to be conformed;" it is to the fulness of the height of the stature of Christ Jesus, high as it rises above all human excellence, that we are all yet to attain. To be like Him in all things, "grace for grace," to have His character fully formed in us, this is the perfection to which our Christian life ever tends, and which at last it is to reach. This perfection is not indeed fully revealed to us; "it doth not yet appear what we shall be;" that last development of our life, when grace shall pass into glory, is yet hidden from our sight. But we know that all the glory of it shall consist in its likeness to Him. "We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." Our growth in grace, then, is nothing else than our increasing likeness to Christ. To know if we are so growing, we have but to compare our life with His, to see how much of His Spirit dwells in us, how far "the mind that is in us" is the "mind of Christ;" to see how far we love what He

loved, hate what He hated, desire what He desired; to see how far we can enter into that fellowship with Him which can only arise from increasing likeness to Him: how far we can understand and know Him, as kindred natures alone can understand and know each other; how far we have been baptized with His baptism, drunk of His cup, shared in His death, and know the fellowship of His sufferings and the power of His resurrection. It is only by such comparison of ourselves with Christ, our great example, that we can learn how far we are growing in grace. All other comparisons of ourselves with others, or with our past selves, are uncertain and dangerous. The standard of comparison in either case is so low that it is only too easy for us to flatter ourselves that because we have reached or even passed it, we have made great progress in the spiritual life. And so pride, and carelessness, and self-righteous complacency will check our growth in grace; or if we be given to despond, we shall be cast down often with as little reason, writing bitter things against ourselves, because we are not all we see others are, or all we think we once were; while, it may be, the very difference we see is a sign not of decay but of growth, not of decline but of progress. But no such danger arises from comparing ourselves with our true example, Christ. Infinitely above us as that example is; contrasting, in all its bright perfection, with our imperfect imitation of it; humbling us, as it does whenever we behold it, until we are ashamed even to think of our miserable shortcomings,—yet no despondency need mingle in our humility, for vast as is the height at which that life stands above us, we may, even as we scan it, have within us the assurance that we shall yet traverse it. Glorious as that ideal of excellence is, we may possess a pledge that we shall yet attain to it. For we know that

He has not come to mock us with the display of a perfection that never can be ours. We know that that life of His, all-glorious as it is, He has lived, just for this, that it may be ours too. And we know, too, that as it has its perfection in Him, so it must have its beginnings in us, must have its gradual increase and growth, and that if we can recognise its beginnings, if we can only see in ourselves the first faint motions of the new and heavenly nature, then may we hope and believe that the life so begun, which is none other than His life, shall grow to that fulness of glory that we see in Him. Wrapped up in the acorn lies, from the first, all the strength of the oak. Hidden in the dark colourless root lies all the beauty of the flower. And the first small green leaf that peeps above the surface gives sure promise of all the future growth of flower and of tree. So, as we watch the first growth of the new life in us, as we recognise in it the essential character that marks it for what it is, even as we grieve to see that it is yet so small and weak, even as we tremble while we think of all the dangers that threaten its existence, and shrink from the thought of all the watchful care and toil we must bestow to foster and defend its growth, we may still in all humility and godly fear, yet with all faith and hope, rejoice as we hail the appearance of this work of God, and believe that He who has begun it will carry it on to the end.

And of the character of this Divine life in us—of that which, when we see it, distinguishes the new nature from all other—the Word of God leaves us in no doubt. That character is sonship, “To as many as believed on Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God.” The essential principle of this new life, that which makes it altogether new, is that in it we regain our lost relation to the Father of our spirits, and become once more His

children. "Behold," says the Apostle John, "what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called the sons of God." "I will arise and go to my Father," is the first word of the new life in him who was dead and had been made alive; and in that word lay folded up the whole joy and glory of his return; just as in the word of selfish and unfilial separation, "Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me," lay all the sin and misery of his exile. "Abba, Father," is the first word that "the Spirit of adoption" whispers in our hearts. "Our Father," is the daily speech of that new nature which that Spirit bestows. "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit," is the last utterance of that nature as it enters into its last trial and undergoes its last change. It is this filial spirit which, all through its progress, rules and shapes the Christian life. It is the vital principle according to which growth in grace develops itself. It is this which, infusing itself into all the nature of the renewed man, changes it; not by bestowing new faculties or powers, but by restoring the old to their true use, and giving them their true aim and direction. It is this which ever wars against and expels the old evil lusts of the flesh. It is this which casts out disobedience from the will, and lawlessness from the desires, and impurity from the heart. It is this which, entering into all the religious emotions, makes them in like manner new; changes the "sorrow of the world" into "godly sorrow," fear of wrath into fear of sin, and morality into holiness, and formal service into spiritual communion, and hope of heaven as an alternative to hell into longing for the presence and the vision of God.

From first to last, then, this Spirit of adoption is the characteristic of the new life. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God:" here is the beginning of that life.

“When He shall appear we shall be like Him :” here is its completion ; and all that lies between these two is “growth in grace.”

Now though, as I have said, if we measure our growth in grace by comparing any of our graces with the perfect example of those in Christ, we shall only learn how infinitely we fall short of them ; yet if we measure it by the degree in which this Spirit of Christ, this filial and loving Spirit is growing in us, we may find evidence of a real growth in grace. For we may find it not only, or perhaps chiefly, in any great increase of any Christian graces, or of all of them ; we may find it rather in the grief that we feel because there is so little of such growth, in the earnest desires and longings for more grace, in the increasing consciousness of evil in us,—proofs not that the evil in us is increasing, but that our power of discovering it, and our pain at its presence, is increasing. Not always in the strength of our will, or the fervour of our love, or the freedom of our prayer, or the fulness of our peace is the best proof given of our growth in grace. It may be given, though we fail at first to see it, in the discovery of the weakness of our will, and the coldness of our hearts, and the sinfulness of our lives. It may be, as we “mourn in our prayer and are vexed,” and as we long in the very disquietude of our hearts to flee away and be at rest, that we have the best proof that things belonging to the Spirit live and grow in us, and that all carnal affections are dying in us. And, further, if it be this filial character of our new nature that really is its vital principle and rules its growth, we learn that we can lay down no fixed and rigid rule for the order of that growth. We may not say, for instance, that in every case the new life begins with contrition, and then passes through faith and assurance of forgive-

ness to perfect peace. No such rigid and uniform rule as this is laid down in Scripture. We may as well say beforehand in what order the leaves in spring should burst out upon the budding trees. In every true child of God all the phases of spiritual life will surely display themselves, but not all in the same order. In some the new life may begin in tears and agonies of sorrow, and pass on into smiles of joy and peace; in others it may begin in quiet and peaceful trust and happy service, to be disturbed, it may be ere long, with deep contrition for sin, begotten not of fear but of love. It is the height of presumption to attempt to limit the manner of the Spirit's working, or to judge of His presence by any other test than the presence of the work of the Spirit, the conformity to the image of Christ. Wherever there is a Christ-like soul, there is Christ and the Spirit of Christ; wherever there is not this likeness, then, be the feeling or emotion ever so strong, or ever so strictly according to the prescribed rule, there Christ is not.

But if we are to grow in grace, we must know not only the tests but the conditions of such growth. Every life is fitted to exist only under certain conditions; it has its proper element, its proper food, and deprived of these it perishes. And as in the natural, so in the spiritual life, the supply of these is left in a great degree under our own control. The Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ, for instance, by which the soul is "strengthened and refreshed;" the "sincere milk of the Word," by which the newborn life in us should grow; the secret prayer, that opens for us an entrance into the treasury of Heaven; the worship of the sanctuary, that brings into the midst of the assembled saints the presence of their Lord—all these means of grace, through which fresh supplies of food from Heaven should reach our souls, are

ours to use or to refuse; we may, if we please, deprive ourselves of any or of all of these. We may, in our slothfulness, neglect them, or in our presumption despise them, and in each such case we know that our soul's health must suffer, our growth in grace must languish, if it do not altogether cease. Our first question, then, when we find any symptoms of decline in grace, should be, Am I diligently using all appointed means of grace, or have I neglected any one of them? Or, still worse, have I dared to choose between them, and to use some one especially to the disparagement of any other?—to put, for instance, private prayer in place of public worship, or hearing and reading the Word in place of the Holy Communion?—as if God had given us more means of grace than we needed; or as if we, not He, were to judge of what “food is convenient for us.”

Or, again, we may be diligent in the use of all means of grace, and yet use them all amiss. We may so partake of the Lord's supper as to eat and drink in it only our condemnation. We may so read or hear God's Word that it shall be to us a savour not of life, but of death. We may so pray that our prayer shall bring, not blessings, but judgment. We may so worship in the sanctuary that our service shall be an abomination, and our sacrifice an offence. And all the while we may be deceiving ourselves—deeming this regular and formal observance of set duties in itself a proof of grace; dwelling, like the unloving elder brother, in the Father's house, but dwelling there as servants, not sons; serving God, not for love, but for hire. In such a case there can be no growth in grace. All the rich abundance of the feast in our Father's house will profit us nothing, unless we sit down to it in the spirit of the repentant, forgiven, loving son, whose feast is not so much upon his father's gifts as on his

father's love. If, then, while we cannot accuse ourselves of neglecting any one means of grace, we yet find in our souls no growth in grace, then let us see in what spirit, with what aim, we are using all these means. Are we using them as if the grace were in the means, and not in Him who gave them to us? Are we forgetting the Giver in the gifts, and seeking to have even these spiritual riches apart from God? If we are, and just so far as we are, will God withhold from us His best gift—Himself, and this very feast of good things He has spread for us be to our souls but as unsatisfying husks.

But we grow in grace not only by the right use of all means, but by the due performance of all duties. For the soul's health, as for that of the body, there is needed the vigorous and active use of all its powers. Disuse and decay are as clearly connected in the one as in the other. The grace which we do not exercise, like the limb we never use, or the faculty we never exert, withers and dies at last. The duties that are appointed us are not arbitrarily chosen, they are each of them designed to exercise and strengthen some one or other spiritual faculty. And the neglect of any one of these can never be compensated by any additional activity in the performance of any other; we never can omit any one of these without injuring and weakening some corresponding grace, without making our Christian character one-sided and distorted, and therefore weak and sickly. And yet how strongly are we tempted to do this—how constantly do we find ourselves making a selection among our duties, and excusing ourselves for our neglect of some, by extra zeal in the performance of others. For some, home duties are the plea for taking no part in the great works of the Church; for others, a noisy and busy activity in these is made the excuse for the neglected and deserted home. In

their zeal for the Church or for their family, some have no time or thought for their own inner life; busy in watering the vineyards of others, they leave their own to lie waste and untended: while others, again, in their alleged anxiety for their own spiritual progress, profess to have no time or thought for aught beside: all of us only too ready to tithe mint and cummin in the doing of what we like best or find easiest to do, all of us only too ready to forget those other matters of the law—those other duties which, just because we like them least, are for us the weightiest and most pressing.

And, indeed, as a rule we may take for granted, that the duty which we choose, by way of preference, is just the one that we least need to practise; and that the one we most neglect is just the one we most need to observe. We may be sure that it is because there is in the task we shrink from more of the cross for us, and therefore more of the discipline and training that we need, than in any other, that we are shrinking from it. And we may be sure of this too, that so long as we refuse to take up that cross, so long will He who has appointed it for us withhold the blessing which He has bound to it for us; so long will our spiritual life continue faint and languishing, even if at last it do not altogether perish.

But the endeavour “to fulfil all righteousness” helps our growth in grace for another reason. It leads us to the encounter with all unrighteousness: “the spirit lusteth against the flesh, and the flesh against the spirit; and these two are contrary one to the other.” Against every duty stands its opposing temptation; against every grace its corresponding sin. Love strives with hate, and faith with doubt, and hope with fear, and gentleness with wrath, and obedience with lawlessness, and as they strive they grow. Stronger and still stronger does each grace

within us wax, as it gains in its turn its victory over its opposite. And deeper and stronger, too, grows in us that essential element of our perfection—hatred of sin. We cannot be holy without this. The holiness of an unfallen being may consist in mere ignorance of evil; the holiness and safety of a fallen and regenerate being can only consist in the horror of evil that is gained by long and bitter experience of it. He who has known what it is to wrestle in agony with his bosom sin, or face with a desperate courage some terrible and haunting temptation; he who has known how the sin that he deemed slain will start up again mightier than ever, and the temptation once repelled with such desperate effort can return again and again; he who has discovered how what seemed the very smallest sin as he indulged it, seems armed with a giant might when he attempts to oppose it; he who finds how the evil tenants of his heart, that seemed such harmless guests there so long as they held undisturbed possession, can tear and rend that heart asunder ere they will depart from it; he who after some such deadly struggle has gained the victory at the cost of agony unspeakable, or has known the shame and the humiliation of defeat, he has learned, as none save him can learn, the “exceeding sinfulness of sin.” And as he learns it—as he sees all evil in him to be the deadly and loathed enemy of his life, which if he slay not must slay him—he has gained a growth in grace he never could have gained at lesser cost, for he has been taught to “love righteousness and hate iniquity” by the deep conviction wrought, by all his suffering, into his inmost soul that righteousness is life and sin is misery and death.

But this thought, of the help temptation may give to our growth in grace, suggests the thought that there are

conditions of that growth which seem to lie altogether beyond our control,—helps and hindrances which are not of our choosing but of God's appointing. All the external circumstances of our life, for instance; all those distinctions of rank, wealth, education, profession, social and family ties, that make such difference between man and man; these are for the most part not of our making, and these all, we know, largely influence our character and shape our history. How do these of themselves necessarily affect our growth in grace? How far is our spiritual life the "creature of circumstances"? We answer, "Not at all." Not in the very least degree does our growth in grace depend on anything without us. To say that it did, were to say that God could place us in circumstances which forbid our becoming holy, and yet required from us holiness; this were to make Him indeed an austere Master, "reaping where he had not sown, and gathering where he had not strawed."

Wherever the renewed man finds himself in this world, there is the best place for him, the place in which he is put that in it he may grow in grace; "for all things work together for good to them that love God." "All things are ours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are ours, and we are Christ's, and Christ is God's." Here is the reason why nothing in our position need hinder our growth in grace—for "we are Christ's"; and where we are He will be with us still; and so though we walk with him through the furnace of temptation sevenfold heated, no smell of fire even need pass upon our garments: God is with us there, "for Christ is God's." Never let us, then, accuse our circumstances for decline in grace; never let us yield to the vain and sinful wish to be elsewhere than just where we are; never let

us forget that all that we dislike in our present condition, all that seems in it unfavourable to our growth in grace, is not only appointed of God and appointed for this very purpose, that it should help our sanctification, but that it is also known to God ; that He sees, far more clearly than we see, all the difficulties of our position, and has provided for us the "sufficient grace" to meet them. "I know thy works, *and where thou dwellest*," was His message to one whose dwelling was "where Satan's seat was." I know, that is to say, all in thy position that makes it hard for thee to serve Me ; nevertheless that knowledge hinders not the warning, "Repent, and do the first works" ; nor yet the promise, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna."

And never let us forget either, that as circumstances and events in our lives cannot of themselves hinder, so neither can they of themselves promote our growth in grace. It is not the event, it is the use we make of the event,—it is not the circumstance, it is the manner in which we deal with the circumstance,—that makes us the better or the worse for it. Place two men in precisely the same circumstances, and yet how differently will they be affected by them. The danger that makes the brave man braver makes the coward more timorous ; the wealth that makes the spendthrift lavish makes the miser more miserly ; the loving devotion that wins in return the unspeakable love of one heart only increases the tyrannical selfishness of another.

So is the effect of all God's providences upon our spiritual character ; they are not self-acting, they are to us what we make them. "Trials come for our good," as we so often hear men say ; but the good must be drawn by us out of the trial, or it profits us not. The same chastening that brings one sinner to "his God right humbly,"

drives another further from Him ; just as the same fire that melts gold will harden clay. Even those outward conditions, then, that seem most beyond our control, are like those other means of grace of which we have spoken—solemn responsibilities, trusts to be accounted for, talents to be improved, opportunities on which may hang eternal life or eternal death. A solemn thing, then, brethren, unspeakably solemn and awful, as well as a glorious and a blessed thing, is this Christian life of ours. For it is a life, the glory and blessedness of which consist in this, that through and in it all may be felt the presence of the indwelling, guiding, teaching, sanctifying Spirit of God. It is a life whose every event and circumstance may, by the power of that Spirit, be made to work for us an exceeding and eternal weight of glory, for it is a life which in its every event and circumstance might be made to minister to our growth in grace. But then how awful does this life appear, when we remember that in us lies the power of turning every one of its blessings into a curse,—when we think that, according as we use them, may means of grace become means of destruction, and opportunities for good become occasions of evil, and merciful chastenings become hardening judgments, and all our history one long growth in sin, one long terrible ripening for the inheritance of sinners in eternal misery.

May God preserve us all from the sin of a wasted life ! May God grant us all “by His holy inspiration to know what things we ought to do, and grace and power faithfully to fulfil the same !”

FORETELLING AND FORTH-TELLING.

FORETELLING AND FORTH-TELLING.

PREACHED IN PETERBOROUGH CATHEDRAL, JANUARY 1ST, 1871.

“ Watchman, what of the night?
The morning cometh and also the night ! ”
ISAIAH XXI. 11—12.

THERE is a strange and startling abruptness in this prophetic utterance. It has no connection with those that precede or that follow it. Nothing seems to have suggested it, nothing to result from it. It intrudes itself suddenly, unaccountably, in the course of the prophecy in which it appears. It falls on our ears like the cry of the sentinel whom it depicts. A voice from out of the darkness, breaking for an instant with its weird sound the stillness of the night, and then floating away on the wind, until its echoes die down into silence and once more all is still. What does it mean, this cry of the midnight watcher? What is this burden of Edom, of which it speaks? What morning of prosperity, what night calamity awaits the people whose fate it seems so mysteriously to foretell?

We know not, and we shall never know; nor, what is more, could those who first heard it have known. Some prosperity, some calamity, it certainly foretold for their enemies, the Edomites; but as to what these were to consist of, or where or how they were to come to pass, they are told absolutely nothing.

What lesson, then, either of warning or of encouragement could they have derived, could they have been intended to derive, from this message of their Prophet? For all practical purpose, for any use it could have been to them, or to any one since their day, it might as well, apparently, have been unspoken.

And so assuredly it might have been, and so too might many another prophecy have been, were prophecy nothing else and nothing better than many suppose it to be. What is the idea that too many devout and believing students of the Bible still have of the Prophets of the Old Testament, and of their place and their use in their own day and ours? Is it not this,—that a prophet was a man divinely inspired to foresee and foretell to his fellow-countrymen coming events, and that afterwards his predictions with their fulfilment should remain to us as proofs of his inspiration, and as reasons why we should believe the Bible in which they appear? To furnish predictions for the Jew and evidences for the Christian: these are the two chief, if not the only, functions with which most persons used, and with which many still continue, to credit the great institution of Jewish prophecy.

If so, it has largely failed of its twofold purpose. Prediction, if it is to be practically useful to those to whom it is given, should be clear and precise; it must say distinctly what is coming, and when and where, that men may know how to govern, with respect to it, their present lives. Evidence, if it is to be convincing, must be positive, unmistakable. There must be, for instance, in the case of prophecy such clear, unquestionable proof as none can reasonably gainsay—first, that the prophet did distinctly foretell that a certain event was to happen at a certain time and place; and next, that at such time and place that event did actually happen.

Now, that there are such predictions in the Bible may, we believe, be clearly shown; but these are comparatively few in number. The greater number of the Old Testament predictions were neither precisely clear for those who first heard them, nor have they been demonstrably fulfilled for us who now study them. There are many of them of which those who heard them might have said—as we know they did say of the utterances of one of the greatest of these Prophets—“Doth he not speak parables?” And, as we know, there are many of them the fulfilment of which is, and always has been, a subject of keen debate amongst Christian students of prophecy.

On this theory, then, of prediction and evidence as the main functions of prophecy, large portions of it are practically useless, serving at best only as exercises for the ingenuity of commentators, but having no bearing whatever upon our daily life; neither teaching us how to live nor how to die; and the teaching which does neither of these things—what have we to do with it, or it with us?

But quite another aspect is given to this question if we regard prophecy in what assuredly is its true light: and that is, that the real aim and function of it was primarily neither prediction nor evidence, but instruction in righteousness. The prophet was not merely nor even mainly a foreteller; he was something far greater, far higher; he was a forth-teller; he was a man chosen, called and sent of God to be the witness for His laws and for His holy will, in the midst of a “rebellious and gainsaying people.” He was commissioned to reveal “to Israel his iniquities, and to Jacob his sin.” He was God’s messenger to tell the Jews that they were God’s people; that the land that they called theirs was therefore not their land but His, and that they held it upon strictest covenant of obedience; that Jehovah was their Lord, and not theirs only,

but Lord of all the earth. He was to proclaim to Israel that "the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." He was to "tell it out among the heathen that the Lord was King." In face of tyrant king and traitor priest and false pretending prophet he was "to cry aloud and spare not," to lift up his voice as a trumpet in sternest rebuke and solemnest warning. He was to stand beside the actors in the drama of their natural life, and as it passed before him to flash upon it the light, the white light from the throne of God's judgment seat, that still showed it, as it will one day show all things and all men, exactly as it was; exposing the hypocrisies, the cant, the dishonesties, the false pretences, the lies, the iniquities of his day; writing still his "Mene, Mene, Tekel" upon all the banquet walls where throned and sceptred sin was feasting: prophesying destruction and defilement for all altars where false priests were worshipping false gods; telling the nation now to lament for that over which it was rejoicing, now to rejoice for that over which it was lamenting. Stern, faithful witness for God and for His law, championing ever right against might, justice against wrong, truth against falsehood, holiness against sin; he was for ever revealing to his countrymen the true meaning of their history in the light of the one great central fact that conditioned and explained it all, that God was the ruler and judge of all men; that His government was a moral government, "the sceptre of His kingdom a right sceptre;" that as they served or disobeyed Him did nations fade or flourish, that the morn of their sinful prosperity must end in night, and the night of penitent affliction end in day: because the Lord was King.

Not foresight, then, was the chief gift of the prophet, but insight—a far rarer and far more precious gift. God's seer was he, whose eyes God had opened to see all men

and all things as God sees them. His was the gift, not so much to foresee future time as to understand his own. Compared with this, foresight is at the best but a poor gift. The prophet might share it with the witch and the wizard. It is not always divine; it may be devilish, and its possession may turn men into devils. Never did our great dramatist display a deeper knowledge of human nature than when he pictures the moral nature of one who was once the simple loyal soldier, true to his sovereign and his country, withering rapidly away in the lurid light of the witch fires that showed him to himself as thane and king that was to be. We are not fitted, our souls are not strong enough, to bear the awful gaze into the future that must paralyse or pervert the present, that must make our life unnatural, and therefore almost certainly evil.

But insight, the power to see things as they truly and really are, the knowledge not of where or what we shall be to-morrow, but of where and what we are now; the light which falls not upon the distant horizon but upon the path before our feet; the gift which makes us not knowing, but wise, and wise unto salvation; this, for man or for nation, is God's most precious gift. And this, in far greater measure than is ordinarily bestowed on men, was God's chief gift to His Prophets of old. By the help of it they saw ever clearly before them two great facts: one a Kingdom of God on earth, and the other Kingship of God over all other kingdoms, though they knew and owned Him not. They saw in the Jewish nation and polity a kingdom distinct from, differing from all others in this, that it was founded in righteousness, that it possessed a divinely revealed law, and enjoyed a divine presence which was not vouchsafed to other kingdoms; a kingdom whose mission on earth was to preserve the

knowledge of, and maintain the rule of, the one and only true God ; to keep alive for mankind pure faith and pure life amidst the false faiths and foul life of surrounding heathendom. And on the other hand they saw the supreme rule and moral government of the Lord over all those mighty empires which rose and fell around the little realm of Palestine, as the waves of the sea rise and swell and toss around some beacon whose light shines out upon their dark restless waves, and whose rock-grounded strength resists their fiercest might.

And we to whom through all the ages come these Prophets' words of warning or of cheer ; we who are called as they were to witness still to these two great facts which still dominate all human history—a kingdom of God amongst men, divine, God-ruled, God-indwelt, obeying a law which is not of this world : and the kingdoms of men ruled, though they know it not, by Him who setteth up one and pulleth down another, as it pleases Him ; now bidding them to serve, now permitting them to assail, but never suffering them to overthrow that other kingdom set in their midst,—we, too, may grow wiser by their insight, braver by their courage, stronger by their faith, as we in our turn strive to maintain and spread first within His kingdom, and then throughout the world, the knowledge and the love of the one and only King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Thus regarded, we can see how even the obscurest of prophecies may have had its use for those who heard it. We can see how it must have helped to keep alive in the heart of the people to whom it was spoken faith in a living and a righteous ruler of mankind, telling them that not chance, nor fate, nor any one of the false gods of the heathen round about them, but a just and Almighty Lord was ruling and over-ruling all the affairs of men ;

and, therefore, that their only safety in the presence of nations greater and mightier than they lay in the knowledge of and obedience to His holy law and commandments; and so as each nation or empire rose on their horizon, threatening or tempting them with fear of destruction, it was confronted by their Prophets with their words of stern and lofty defiance:—Fear not, they still said to God's chosen people, nor be dismayed at the greatness nor at the threats of your enemies. These great world powers have all of them their rounds fixed, and their times appointed for them by Him who has spread out the heavens as a curtain, and placed the sands of the sea for a barrier that they cannot overpass; the advancing tide of their invasion shall not overflow your name, and your place among the nations shall not be swallowed up nor lost in the threatening depths of their conquests, if only you will obey your Lord and theirs. Fear Him, and you will have no cause to fear them.

For such a purpose as this it was not necessary that each prophecy should be clear, precise and plain. It was not necessary that they should know the when and the where and the how of God's promised interference on their behalf, if only they knew assuredly that He would so interfere; they did not need to know when the day of doom for their enemies should dawn, if only they knew that there was a doom, and that the hour of it was measured and appointed in the unchanging councils of the Lord of Hosts.

Occasionally to such a people there might be given, and there were given, to strengthen their faith, distinct predictions of near events, the distinct fulfilment of which they were allowed to see; the destruction, for instance, of some invading besiegers, the coming years of captivity, and the joy of their deliverance and restoration. These and

the like events, distinctly foretold, and distinctly coming to pass, gave ground for believing all the rest; but one and all, fulfilled in their time or delayed, clear or dark, mystic and symbolical or plain and precise, all alike spoke the same lesson straight to the heart and to the daily life of the Jew: the lesson of courage and of faith, of patience and obedience, the lesson that this world is God's world and not man's, that His will, not ours, rules all its forces, shapes all its destinies, and that His is a righteous will. All else is unstable, uncertain, fleeting and vanishing away; men and nations come and go, their day of triumph and of prosperity, their night of shame and ruin wax and wane, and the glory of them and the shame of them ere long lie dead together, as the withered flowers of the field beneath the scythe of the mower; but the word of the Lord abideth for ever and for ever.

And now, with this guiding thought in our minds, let us turn to the prophecy in our text. The scene which it depicts is an eminently typical one. It is one that we see repeating itself through all time. It is that of a nation in its dark hour calling on its seer for light. The people of Edom are depicted as citizens in some beleaguered city, crying to their sentinel watchman—"What of the night? what of the night?" Is it not ever so? Is it not that through all human history we see the multitudes resorting thus to their chosen leaders for light and for guidance, at the time of their deepest distress? High above the lower ways of life, all thronged as they are with the toiling crowds, whose eyes, dimmed oft with tears, are bent ever downwards upon the hard paths in which they seek with pain and weariness their daily bread, stand those who have been born or have climbed to higher place, and who can see or are supposed to see

a wider horizon than is visible for those beneath them—thinker, teacher, preacher, poet, orator, statesman, leaders all and watchmen of the people—to these the multitudes still cry aloud, Tell us what of the night! you, whom genius, knowledge, power, rank have lifted up so far above us, tell us what is it that from your high places you can discern of the coming day that we long for and cannot see.

The night of our sorrow and our helplessness hangs upon us dark and heavy, a darkness that may be felt. It wears our hearts out with weary waiting for the morn that seems never to come. Can you discern no streaks of the dawn? Can you give us no promise, no hope, that, before we pass away and are no more seen, our eyes shall behold the light and we shall feel its warmth, were it but of one summer's day of our life on earth? Oh, watchman, watchman, what of the night?

Solemn and sad and terrible, too, is this cry of those who suffer and who sorrow, unto those on whom they have fixed their hope. Woe to him who misinterprets, or who answers it amiss; woe to him, who, being trusted, deceives; being a chosen guide, misleads; who sees in the glow from the camp fires of some invading enemy of humanity the red streak of the dawn; who announces as the coming morning only some added terror of the night! Such false watchmen do worse than deceive those who trust in their prophecies, they demoralise and degrade. Man's hopes for the future, man's faith in a higher and better life, man's trust in humanity itself are weakened by every such disappointment, until at last they sicken even unto death. If these whom we so trusted, is their cry, if these who for what they promised us of better things have been lifted by us into higher place, if these saviours of society fail us, whom can we trust?

What is there left for us to hope for? The stars that we looked up to have proved but wandering and deceiving lights, meteors shining only to betray; nothing is then left for us save to drift aimlessly, helplessly along, as the currents and the streams of this troubled ocean of life on which we are afloat may bear us. If so, let us drown our care in the intoxication of sin and of vice. Let us drain the wine of iniquity, even though it maddens to crime. Let us eat and drink, nay, let us arise and kill that we may eat, for to-morrow we die. And so the nation that has lost its faith perishes, must perish, in the night of its dark distrust. With faith depart courage, patience, self-denial, self-respect, nay, even love, stronger than death though it be, but unable to survive the death of true manhood and the triumph of the beast in man; and in their stead comes fretful impatience, coward selfishness, wild envy and hate of those who want against those who have, and fierce despair, tugging in its blind misery and wrath at the pillars on which society rests, satisfied to perish if it may only involve with itself all that it hates in one common destruction.

Let us listen, then, to the answer which this watchman, this divinely inspired seer, has to give to a people's cry for guidance. The answer, like the speaker, is eminently typical. If this watchman represents all seers, his utterance represents the teaching of all true seers, as distinguished from those who falsely claim the title. It is, we see, a double forecast—it predicts a coming day, but also a coming night—light and darkness interchanging and intermingling. Now it is precisely in this respect that the true forecast for humanity differs from the false.

Two schools of the prophets, two philosophies of life there are, which all along the course of human history have claimed to solve its mystery and to predict its course. Of

one of these the prophecy is all of the morn, of the other all of the night. The optimist and the pessimist have each his forecast for our race, each of them false. The one is ever predicting a coming morn, that shall never be darkened into night: the other a coming night that shall never know a morn.

The optimist is for ever telling us of some great happy day for humanity, the dawn of which he tells us he can clearly discern already climbing up the heavens. The enthusiast, the dreamer, the reformer—religious, or political, or social—has always his plan, his project, his newly-invented patent for the regeneration of society, and he proclaims it with the confident promises of its certain near success: Adopt my plan, try my experiment, accept my creed, carry out my reform; and all will be well, and that speedily. The march of humanity, is it not ever onwards and upwards? Circumstances only, accidents merely, hinder its triumphant progress. Let us but alter these circumstances and provide against these accidents, and the new day of humanity has begun. Such prophets never lack disciples. The multitude who suffer and who sorrow listen eagerly to him who tells them that all of their sufferings and most too of their sorrow arises from no fault of theirs, but only from the faults of the society of which they are the innocent and afflicted members. Greedily do they drink, in the fever thirst of their misery, from the ever-flowing stream of confident promise which babbles on and on of rest and comfort and peace and joy that are always coming, and yet that somehow never come. And still the cry of the unabashed though ever confident prophet is, "The morning cometh." And it does so often seem really to have come. Ever and again some old order vanishes, and with it vanish the old wrongs, evils, shames, miseries that it gave birth and shelter to; and the new

order comes in its place, its face as that of an angel, its hands filled with gifts for men: all will surely now be well! Alas, alas! ere long the face begins to wear the old human look of weariness and feebleness, of passion and of pain. It grows prematurely old and haggard, and is seen to be smitten with that strange, mysterious disease that has smitten in turn all that came before it. The precious things that filled its hands seem, somehow, like fairy gifts, to be withering into dust. The old evils are gone, new ones have taken their place, and the new are not a whit easier to bear than the old. Unforetold failure, unimagined troubles, unforeseen difficulties spring up as it were out of the ground, which somehow seems still to bring forth briars and thorns as of old. Between humanity and its new paradise waves still that swift revolving sword of fate or chance which still forbids an entrance there. Humanity is not at rest, is not at peace; the morn of the new day is swiftly clouded over; the heavens grow black again, wild storms beat down as of yore the shelters within which men had fondly thought themselves secure. Once more does the weary saddened multitude cry for light; once more does the cry of the false sentinel echo through the darkness, "The morning cometh, the morning cometh." Once more from out of the tombs and the ruins of the new order, as from the old, comes the mocking answer, "Also the night, also the night!"

Yes, all experience, all history, all that we know of our own lives, all that we know of the history of our race tells us that whatever be the true philosophy of life, whatever be the true forecast for humanity, this of the optimist is demonstrably false.

Let us listen, then, to another seer. Over against the optimist stands the pessimist. The man who, fixing his gaze always on the darker side of human history, noting

its crimes, its miseries, its follies, its failures as it vainly struggles to deliver itself from the ever-entangling web of evil circumstance, that, spite of all its efforts, still drags it down to earth as the snare of the fowler drags its fluttering, screaming, helpless captive, utters his prediction, based, as he tells us, not upon a dream of a future never to come, but on the surer evidence of a too certain past, an experience which worketh not hope but despair. As it has been, he tells us, so shall it ever be; man can never rise out of and beyond himself, his attempts to do so must end as they always have ended, in utter and disappointing failure. Why then should we thus continue to deceive ourselves? Why not face the facts of existence as they are, as all history demonstrates that they must be? Why not confess once and for all that religion is a deception, civilization a fraud, society a blunder or a crime; and either set us down to bear the evils these are causing, knowing that if these were to vanish others and worse would come in their places, or, if this be too great a demand upon our endurance, why not sweep all these away by one convulsive effort, and try with a desperate plunge the very utmost depths of our fate? What these may be we know not, we care not; only let us have done for ever with these quack remedies for an incurable disease which only aggravate its bitterness. For faith let us choose agnosticism; for order, anarchy; for social institutions of all kinds whatsoever, nihilism; for these deceptive imaginary mornings of progress, the reality, grim though it be, of nothingness and despair.

And he too has his disciples, not for the most part like the optimist drawn from the multitude who toil and suffer. Pessimism will never be the poor man's faith. He cannot afford to part with the dream of the future, dream though it be, in which he can take refuge from the dull, weary

misery of the present. The poor are for the most part optimists. If they were not they would not be the easy prey they are for the demagogue who seeks to rise on their shoulders to power by promises of the good time coming, when all men shall be equally rich and equally happy. No ! pessimism is the creed of a man who has enjoyed life to the utmost, and for whom it has become all weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable. The worn out voluptuary, the *blasé* man of rank and wealth and fashion who has had all that the poor man longs for, and who can tell him that it does not bring the happiness he dreams that it can give ; the man who, tired and sick of life's banquet, falls to criticising its dainties and to scoffing at its tawdry and faded ornaments ; the cynic who sneers at all the higher, nobler, purer, instincts of our nature, which he has lost for himself and therefore loves to deny the existence of in others, delighting to expose with irreverent hand the most hidden shames and sores of our poor humanity, showing, as it is so easy to show them, how thin are the veins of gold that traverse the thick clay of our human nature. For him the philosophy of the pessimist may well be the only true philosophy of life. And close in the train of the cynic come the pleasure-loving and the profligate ; they, too, like well enough the theory of life which assures them that virtue is most probably only a hypocrisy, and is at any rate a profitless waste of energy, better spent in the search after enjoyment. And so, as this miserable creed spreads itself abroad amongst men does virtue die, and vice, naked and not ashamed, flaunt herself in all the ways of men ; and with her come her two devoted servants, degraded art and depraved and depraving literature, boasting their faithfulness to their goddess Nature, proclaiming their new cult of realism — the worship of nastiness — the deification of filth. And these, all of these cry aloud

as they pass along their evil ways, "Also the night, also the night!" And to furnish us with light in its darkness they will give us the phosphorescence of corruption, the corpse lights flitting to and fro over the graves of faith and hope and love.

But odious and revolting as is this forecast for humanity, the question we have to decide for ourselves is not, Is this horrible? but, Is it true? Is this prophecy, so largely justified by all the past of mankind, a true vision of its future? Thank God that we can answer, No! a thousand times no! In the name of the humanity that you libel, in the name of that human heart by which we live; in the name of the soul that aspires, the heart that loves, the conscience that, elevating, purifying soul and heart, lifts man above the beast you say he is, we challenge your prophecy of night, we reject your hideous gospel of despair. Even had we no other, no nobler vision of our future given us from above; even were there no voice of seer other than yours to break in upon the darkness of our night, we have still two revelations left which largely testify against your creed. They are experience and history. There is no man who has ever manfully fought down the beast within him, and raised himself on stepping stones of his dead self to better things; there is no devoted woman, spending her life in loving sacrifice for others; there is not one who has ever gained one real victory over evil in the world around him; nay, there is not one even of the most bitter and vicious outcasts of society, whose shame and ruin you blazon as the proof of your miserable predictions, who does not by the exceeding bitterness of his agonising cry for deliverance from a state the wretchedness of which proves it to be unnatural for him, who does not own to a belief—deep as the innermost core of our nature, old as its first sorrow, universal as is

that very law of decay and death over which you gloat, strong so that no waters of affliction have ever quenched it—that we are not as the beasts that perish ; that there is in us something greater, nobler, more enduring too than external circumstances and change and death, and that we shall survive all these.

And history too, the story of our race, if it gives you good proof of your evil prophecy, gives its refutation too ; for it tells us how still from out of this humanity which you declare tends ever to dissolution and corruption there have arisen again and yet again, even in its darkest hours, heroes, sages, prophets, martyrs, whose words and deeds in their day, as stars in the night, have not yet withdrawn their shining. It tells us how strangely by the power of some hidden, unquenchable life, this degenerate humanity of ours, at which you mock, has been suddenly regenerated in these and in thousands whom their lives have stirred to nobler life again. Each and all of them are our witnesses against these prophets of the night ; each one of these who in their day found life worth living, because they found a sweetness even in death itself, for the sake of their fellow men ; each one of them, from their shrines in the loving memories of men, in answer to your false watchword, “ The night cometh,” still cry aloud, “ Also the morning, also the morning ! ”

And now that we have seen how these two forecasts for our race, that of the optimist and that of the pessimist, are ever contradicting each other ; how each can in turn appeal to, and each in turn be refuted, by facts in the nature or in the history of mankind ; let us see what Christianity has to say to both. The answer of the Christian prophet, and every Christian so far as he truly is a Christian is a prophet, nay, though he be least in the kingdom of heaven, even a great prophet,—the answer of

every Christian who understands his faith is for both these false seers the same. Your prophecy is false because it is but half a prophecy; you fail in foresight, because you lack insight; you do not understand the nature, you do not know the true history of the humanity whose horoscope you are trying to cast. You cannot foretell its future, because you are ignorant of its past. Two facts there are in human history which you willingly are ignorant of, but which alone can explain for you its present or foreshadow its future. They are its fall and its redemption. Of these science finds no trace, and the history which records them for us you pronounce to be a fable. And yet they give us just that insight respecting it which you have not. They enable us, therefore, to make for our case a surer forecast than you can ever make; just because they do what neither of you can ever do, explain and harmonize these two opposing series of facts on which you base your respective prophecies.

To the optimist we say, the fact of which you take no notice, and your ignorance of which makes all your prophecy nothing better than a dream, is this—that humanity has fallen to its present condition from a higher and a happier state, that in its fall it has suffered such injury, has been so enfeebled, so hurt and strained that it can no longer stand upright. A poison, a deadly poison, has intermingled itself in all its life blood, and has tainted it through and through, manifesting itself in ever varying symptoms, all indications of the same disease. If this be so, it is clear that no changes of outward circumstances can ever remedy this evil. Here and there, now and then, they may palliate it. The conditions of this or that man's life may shield him from moral dangers to which his less fortunate brethren are exposed; wise legislation may even remove from whole classes of society some of those tempta-

tions to which they are especially liable ; but these changes of circumstances no more avail to cure the disease of sin in the nature of man, than change of climate will avail to cure the taint of hereditary disease in the human body ; sooner or later the lurking malady breaks out again in the body politic, baffling the skill of the reformer or the legislature, putting to shame and confusion the smooth prophecies of the social quack. Sin inherited from the first of our race, transmitted from father to son, through all its history, is the one root evil of humanity, which no lopping and pruning of the branches can ever hinder from bringing forth its fruit in due season ; and that fruit is death. And this, we maintain, is the one fatal mistake of the optimist, that he ignores in his prophecies the one central dominant fact in human nature, that he is consequently always prophesying an impossibility, the growth of a *perfect* human society out of an imperfect humanity. It cannot be ; pull down, alter, rebuild the fabric of society as you will, the material with which you rebuild or reconstruct is still the same, is still nothing else and nothing better than that faulty human nature, which has failed in the hand of every builder, and will fail to the end of time. In vain do you plan in your optimist dreams some social fabric of faultless magnificence, in vain do you dream some stately pleasure dome, beneath which humanity shall dwell secure and at ease. The builders who are to give effect to your dream must form their bricks of the perishable earth slime and rest their foundations on the shifting sand of a fallen nature. And full surely the time will come for them, as it has come for all that preceded them, when the wild floods of passion rise against, and the rain and the wind of sudden calamity smite down upon, their building, and it shall fall, and great shall be the fall thereof ; and thus shall be its record written on its ruins :

“Lo, these men began to build, but were not able to finish.” And the reason for their failure will be, that they began to build without rightly ascertaining the nature of their materials; they did not understand the elementary fact that before you can regenerate society you must begin by regenerating man.

But if the prophecy of the optimist is false because he ignores the fall of man, equally false is that of the pessimist, who denies the redemption of mankind. No one can believe this fact, and be a pessimist. No one can despair of the future of humanity, who believes that God has come to its rescue. Sorely troubled he may be to reconcile with this belief the present condition of mankind; hard he may find it to understand why, if Omnipotence is indeed engaged in the deliverance of our race, that deliverance should have been so long delayed. As he contemplates the crimes, the shames, the griefs, the sufferings of men; as he listens to the sorrowful sighing of the needy, and the cries of the oppressed, and the groans of the dying, the wailings of the mourner for the dead; as he feels himself imprisoned and pressed down beneath the great altar of sacrifice, on which humanity seems to lie a bound and helpless victim; passionate, appealing, all but challenging, may be his cry, “How long! O Lord, how long! When, oh, when wilt thou arise and scatter thine enemies and ours for ever? When shall our warfare that we are wearily, sadly fighting for Thee be accomplished? When shall Thy kingdom of peace and righteousness be established in all the earth?” But if he believe that at last that kingdom shall be established, he may weary but he cannot despair. But for him who has no such belief, for him who has satisfied himself, and rightly satisfied himself, that humanity has in itself no power of deliverance, and who denies the fact of a divine deliverer, pessimism seems

the only possible belief. The pessimist has so far the better of the optimist, that his creed is the more logical of the two ; appealing to the history of the past, he does but say, "What has always been shall always be ; night has always, and shall always, swallow up morning. I see no reason why it should not be so." Still the other can but say, "What has always been shall not continue always to be, although I can give you no reason why it should not continue for ever." Not from nature, then, nor from history, but from revelation only, can we learn the great fact that completely refutes the pessimist. Deprive us of this, and we shall turn pessimist too, even as he would have done who said, "If in this life only we have hope, we are of all men most miserable." To the prophet of evil our answer then is this : So long as you deny the fact of the redemption of mankind, we do not greatly care to argue with you ; you are, perhaps, right if there has been no Saviour, no incarnate, dying, redeeming Christ. Only because we know that there has been such a Saviour, do we hold your prophecy to be demonstrably false, and your philosophy of life to be a hideous blunder. Meanwhile you are yourself an evidence of our faith of no mean value ; the darker your picture of humanity and its future grows, the stronger grows for us the proof that such a deliverer as we believe in was needed, and that such a need of deliverance might well have brought for us such a deliverer. You cannot say worse of our natural condition than we say, when we affirm that it was so sad, so desperate, that it drew down from Heaven the pitying, loving Son of God. Laugh on, then, at our faith in such a Saviour ; laugh your bitter contemptuous laugh at this poor race of ours trying to live a life not worth the living. All that we have to say to you in reply is, "We know that our Redeemer liveth." Our answer then, both to the optimist and to the pessimist, is

that our faith is more truly optimist than the one, more truly pessimist than the other. To the optimist we say, we agree with you in all you say as to the glorious future that awaits humanity. Our quarrel with you is that you do not make this glorious enough; we tell you that, "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive" the good things that God hath prepared for us. We go far beyond you in our vision of the glorious possibilities of the race, whose progress we believe stops only at the very throne of God, in which dwells for ever a Son of Man. Only do we differ from you as to the time when this vision shall be realized; unlike yours, our golden city, within which nor sin nor sorrow shall ever find entrance, cometh down from above. And until it comes, we hold the vision of an abiding city here below as but a delusion and a dream.

To the pessimist we say, we agree with all you say as to the weakness, the vileness, the degrading faults and errors of human nature; but with you, too, we find this fault, that you have not painted this in its darkest colours, for you do not know what we know—that all you point to of weakness and of evil in our nature is but the outcome and the symptom of something more evil still; that alienation of the soul of man from God, which, if it cannot be healed, must lead him further and still further away into depths of evil, deeper than any you have ever discerned, even into the blackness of darkness of despair for ever. We can set no bounds to the terrible possibilities of a race which produces, even now in this world of mixed good and evil, not only brutal but devilish men. Yes, if the optimism of Christianity reaches upwards, even into Heaven, its pessimism reaches downwards, even into Hell. And because it does so, it can better explain the present, it can better forecast the future of mankind than can

either the imperfect optimism of the optimist or the imperfect pessimism of the pessimist, who reject its two greatest revelations—that man has destroyed himself, and that his help is in God. But it may be said, it *is* said, to us, in answer to our claim for Christianity that it more truly than any other philosophy or any other faith reveals the future of humanity—How do you prove the truth of your prophecy? Granting that, as you allege, ours is altogether false, how do you show that yours is any better, that it is anything else than one more amongst many guesses at the solution of the great mystery of human life? Our answer to this challenge, a perfectly legitimate one, and one we must be prepared to face, is this, that our guess, our hypothesis, if you will allow it to be no more, has at least this to recommend it over yours: that if it does not completely solve, it goes far nearer to solving, that great enigma than does yours. It takes into account, it largely harmonizes all those facts, one half of which only are recognised by each of your philosophies. It goes further, very much further than any other theory of life to explain the strange contradictions, otherwise inexplicable, that humanity presents to us, its greatness and its littleness, its meanness and its majesty, its strength and its weakness, its lofty aspirations and its low desires, its noble sacrifices and its base and cruel selfishness, its miracles of heroic saintliness and its marvels of unnatural depravity and crime, its manifestations now of a nature but a little lower than the angels, and now of a nature lower even than that of the beasts that perish. These contrasting and contradictory facts in our nature, that make it the strange, fascinating, perplexing, half-maddening mystery that it is and ever has been to all who thoughtfully contemplate it, and which are wholly inexplicable either in the theory of the progressive improvement or progressive

deterioration of our race, Christianity alone even attempts the solution of, alone reduces or attempts to reduce under our common law, alone accounts for in their ever varying workings, and predicts their ultimate results. True, it does not explain all that is difficult, or all that is mysterious, in this human life of ours. It does not explain, for instance, that great mystery of mysteries, the origin of evil; nor the yet more painful mystery of the existence, even for an instant, of evil under the rule of a benevolent and almighty Being; nor the kindred mystery of the free will of a creature, whose every other conscious or unconscious act seems done in obedience to changeless and inevitable law. These are difficulties for the Christian philosopher, as they are, and have been, for every philosopher that the world has ever known. But what a claim for Christianity is this, that within the limits which shut in all human thought, it accounts for more of the facts of humanity than any other system of philosophy or of faith. And this is surely a strong presumption, though we admit that it is not a demonstration, of its truth. The test, the only possible test, of any scientific hypothesis is what number of facts does it account for; and that which best accounts for the greatest number of facts clearly deserves acceptance, until men can find a better solution for the problem with which it deals.

Again, this forecast of Christianity for mankind is our answer, and our sufficient answer, to those who taunt us with its failures. We are constantly challenged to show what Christianity has done to justify its proud pretensions. Something, it is admitted, it has done; much, indeed, for individuals; it can count its reformed sinners, its saints, its heroes, its martyrs; and so, we are reminded, can many a creed that we Christians regard as false. It has, doubtless in a great degree, mitigated the ferocities of barbarism; it

has even to a greater degree purified human life ; the standard of morality, it is confessed, is higher in Christian states than it was, or is, in pagan ones ; but this, too, is a success which we are told that we must share, in some measure at least, with Buddhism and Mahometanism ; but what, we are asked, has Christianity done on the great scale for the human race at all proportionate to the greatness of the force which Christians allege that it has brought into the world ? Christ, we are told, is, according to our theory, infinitely greater than Confucius, or Gautama, or Mahomet. Is its influence on the world infinitely greater than theirs ? Is it so much greater as to justify the Incarnation ? Has our great Deliverer really delivered humanity from any one of its besetting evils ? Has His religion extinguished poverty, or cleansed the streets of great Christian cities from their nightly shames and horrors ? Has it put an end to the frauds of commerce and the hard cruelty of competition ; or has it made Christian nations conduct themselves towards each other in compliance with its precepts ? Has it made diplomacy honest or silenced wars ? And if it has not done these things in its long life of eighteen centuries, how has it proved its claim to be divine ?

To this our answer is, If Christianity had ever announced that it was to do any of these things ; if its Founder had ever foretold for it conquests such as these ; then, unquestionably, Christianity is a failure. But this is precisely what He has not done ; nay, He has done the very contrary of this. He has told us from the first that we are not to expect that His religion will effect, or was designed to effect this. He is distinguished from all other founders of religions in this, that He also seems to have distinctly foretold the comparative failure of the religion that He is founding. “ When the Son of Man cometh,”—

he asks, forebodingly, sadly—"shall He find faith on the earth?"

The history of the world in which He is planting His Kingdom is, He tells us, to be very much as it had ever been—careless, regardless of the warning voices that bid it prepare for His coming, buying, selling, eating, drinking, marrying, giving in marriage, until the coming of the Son of Man. Not to regenerate but to redeem the world was the purpose of His first coming. In the midst of that world He founds, as in Palestine God founded of old, a Kingdom of His own, whose citizens are to be gathered out of the kingdom of the world; but which is not to conquer and absorb these; to which His promise is only that it shall not be absorbed and conquered by them: endurance, not universal conquest, is His promise to His Church. Meanwhile, he distinctly tells us that His Kingdom is not of this world, that it will not be until He comes again that the "kingdoms of this world shall become the Kingdoms of God and His Christ."

Nay, meanwhile, this conversion of the kingdoms of this world into the Kingdoms of Christ is manifestly impossible. The laws, the methods of this Church can never be made the laws, the methods of any earthly kingdoms. No nation, governed on strictly Christian principles, could continue to exist for a week.* What nation could survive the application to its offenders of the law of forgiveness until seventy times seven; or to its invaders, the law of non-resistance of evil; or to its paupers the law of giving to those who ask of it; or its would-be creditors the law that from him that would

* The hostile criticism evoked by this statement, of the essential difference between the aims and functions of Church and State, and the misunderstandings to which it gave rise, induced the Archbishop to define and defend his views in an article entitled "The State and the Sermon on the Mount," in the *Fortnightly Review*, January, 1890.

borrow it should never turn away ? The kingdoms of this world are, at best, theistic ; Christian—in the sense of being governed by the laws that govern the Christian Church—they never can be ; and the attempts to make them so that have been made from time to time in the history of Christianity have been dismal failures. Witness the attempt of the Puritans to establish a theocracy to transfer the precepts of the New Testament into the enactments of the Statute Book ; witness the failure of the Papacy in the Middle Ages ; the utter failure of the noblest idea ever conceived by man—the rule of the world by a Vicar of Christ—the supremacy of right over might, of holiness over sin. These and all like attempts were, and always will be, failures ; just because they who make them do *not* give heed to the prophecy of their Divine Seer ; because they believe that before He comes again there ever can be for imperfect men, either a perfect world or a perfect Church.

When, therefore, we are taunted with the so-called failure of Christianity, our answer is that Christianity has not failed to do all that it ever claimed to do—and that is the calling out of the world a people prepared for Christ. To say that it has failed, because it has not effected more than this, is to say that it has failed because it has not done something more, and something else, than He foretold it should do.

If, however, it is important for the defence of Christianity against its opponents that we Christians should clearly understand what it is that it really claims to do for mankind, more important still is it that we should remember this for the guiding and the governance of our own belief and our own life and work for Christ. The Christian, as we have seen, is in no danger of becoming a pessimist, but he is in great danger of becoming an opti-

mist. Believing, as he does, in the Divine might that dwells in his faith ; remembering, as he does, what have been the triumphs of that faith in the past ; he is only too apt to indulge in glorious anticipations of all that it may yet effect for the human race.

Christ, he argues, is in the midst of His Church, His presence shall never fail her ; all that is needed for the conquest of the world by Christianity is that Christians should truly, fully, realize that presence ; that in the might of reviving faith and self-sacrificing love they should go forth conquering and to conquer. How many a prophecy of such triumph rings out from zealous preacher and ardent speaker, as they urge their hearers to some fresh and greater effort for the great cause of the Church's mission at home and abroad ! How often do we hear of the triumph of Christianity, the spread of the gospel throughout the world—the conquest of the Cross ! How often are we told that if so much effort has achieved so much success, then so much more effort will achieve so much more success ! And then when we discover, as we always are discovering, that we cannot safely apply this rule-of-three measure to the working of the Holy Spirit of God, which works still as He listeth, and not as or when or where we calculate He should work ; when we hear from this or that mission field of the Church at home or abroad, not of triumph but of failure, not of progress but of retrogression ; when we hear of heresy and apostacy, of relapsing converts, of decaying and stagnant churches ; when we hear from worn-out missionaries abroad, or grieved and saddened pastors at home, the old lament of the Prophet, “ Lord, who hath believed our report and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed ? ” then we are cast down and dismayed by the taunts of our enemies who flaunt in our faces the failure of our missionaries, and who

challenge us to remedy the evils that confront us still at home ; and we are simple enough to bandy statistics with them, to number converts, to reckon up sittings and sitters in our churches, to try and show that the cost per head of heathen converts is not so much, but so much per cent. upon our expenditure : and if we fail to satisfy them, or to satisfy ourselves that Christianity is making progress, proportioned forsooth to our effort and our expenditure, then to begin half to doubt the truth of our faith, half to question whether Christianity is not after all a failure, and whether it might not be well to get rid of some of its articles of belief which most offend the doubter, or its stricter laws of life which repel the sinner ; whether, in short, it might not be well to enter into some truce or compact with the world in order to buy, when we cannot conquer, its allegiance to our Lord !

All this feeble, half-hearted faithlessness would be saved us if we would but remember that our Lord has sent us forth, not to conquer the world for Him—He will do that in His own time in His own way—but to preach His Gospel for a witness to all nations. That what we are concerned with is not the success, but the truth and faithfulness of our testimony ; willing, if He so order it, that we shall labour not in the brightness always of success, but in the gloom of failure ; remembering always that so long as we imperfect, sinful men are imperfectly striving to do His work in this imperfect world, the forecast of our labours must ever be—"The morning cometh, and also the night."

But if we do remember this, if we bear it ever in mind as we go forth to our work, our warfare for Him, it will give us the courage and the patience that we need for that work—courage that faces difficulties, patience that endures failure ; the equal mind, too, which is neither

exalted by triumph nor cast down by defeat. The flush of each seeming dawn shall fill us with no feverish expectation, the gloom of night with no base despair. For night, we shall remember, must still follow day, and day must succeed to night, until the Sun of Righteousness shall rise and night shall flee away for ever.

Let us gather, then, round one Divine Seer, and ask Him the old question, "Watchman ! Thou that slumberest not, nor sleepest, tell us what of the night ; what of the night ?" Let us listen to His answer—"The morning cometh, and also the night." And let us remember that the watch-tower from which He speaks this word of prophecy for His Church was a cross ; that it was from under the blackened heavens, looking out over the darkened earth He was dying to redeem, that He saw of the travail of His soul, and was satisfied ; that it was with pale and parched lips, all quivering with death agony, that He spoke His great words of triumph, "It is finished." So shall we learn to bear the darkness of our night if He send it. And as we do His work in sunshine, or in thickest gloom, we shall still feel His divine, sustaining, guiding presence in our midst ; beyond our weakness still His strength, beyond our restlessness, His rest ; beyond this chequered twilight scene of mingled light and darkness, His eternal day.

CHRISTIANITY AND FREE-THOUGHT.

CHRISTIANITY AND FREE-THOUGHT.*

PREACHED IN NORWICH CATHEDRAL, MARCH 28TH, 1871.

“How sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?”—ST. JOHN viii. 33.

THE scene described in this chapter makes, I think, a fitting introduction to the series of sermons, of which I am here to-night to preach the first. These sermons are meant to be pleadings for Christ. Their object is to win back to Him those who may have left Him: to cause those who may not have left Him to cling to Him more lovingly than ever. To reclaim disciples to Christ, and to confirm disciples in their discipleship—this is what I and those who are to follow me here have in view. And for this reason I ask you to-night to study with me a little this scene in the life of Christ; because it is one in which we see how Christ Himself, long ago, first won and then lost disciples. The scene commences with a large accession of disciples to Christ. We read that, “as he spake these words many believed on Him.” And it ends with many of those very believers taking up stones to cast at Him. First they believe on Him; shortly afterwards

* The following three sermons were preached on three consecutive days in Norwich Cathedral, and form the first of a series of discourses which it was proposed to hold from time to time in the nave of that Cathedral, in defence and confirmation of the Faith. The discourse entitled “The Demonstration of the Spirit” also forms one of this series, and was delivered by the Archbishop, then Bishop of Peterborough, on the 12th of December in the same year. All four discourses were revised by him and subsequently edited in pamphlet form by Dean Goulburn.

they seek to take His life. And after this is over, we read how His own disciples come to Him again and own Him for their "Master." (*St. John ix. 2.*)

Now, we Christians believe that in this scene we have a prophecy of the whole history of Christ's life in His Church—the story of those who come and of those who go—of those who believe in Him at first and of those who cease to believe in Him, and the inner history too of those who never forsake Him. We believe that when the noisy strife of tongues has passed away and the execrations of those who hate Him have ceased, there will still be heard the voice of the Church saying as of old, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." But it is not on those who thus stay with Christ that I ask you to-night to fix your attention. I ask you to-night to contemplate with me, not those who remain with Him, but those who leave Him. I ask you to try and understand a little of that mental history of theirs which is here shown us, telling how they passed from belief to doubt and from doubt to rejection. It will be profitable to us, I think, both to those who believe and to those (if there are such here) who unhappily disbelieve in Christ, that we should study this instance of early free-thought and disbelief. It will be good for those who do not believe in Christ to look at this scene, because at least it will show them this fact—that from the very first there were those who did disbelieve in Christ. It will show them this fact—that Christianity is not a religion whose origin is lost in the remote and dim distance of time—a legendary faith of which no one can say when it began, who first taught it, or who first believed it. It will show them Christianity rising in historical times, and contending from the very first with unbelief: not ignorantly, not without question or dispute, received among men, but succeeding in spite

of the question and notwithstanding the dispute. It will show them that free-thought is as old at least as Christianity itself; and then it may occur to them, when they read how, long ago, men had the same doubts and the same difficulties they feel they have now, it may occur to them that after all there must be some wonderful power in that faith which struggled into general acceptance, in spite of those doubts and difficulties; that there must be some marvellous vitality in a belief which has survived eighteen hundred years of the assaults of unbelief—something at least worth enquiring into. This bush that is ever burning and never consumed is at least worth just turning aside to look at—is it not? And, then, on the other hand, it will be good for us who believe to look at these early unbelievers: good for us not only for this reason—that it strengthens our faith to know that unbelief is no new thing, and that as Christianity has survived eighteen centuries of unbelief, it may survive more—but good for another and a better reason: that it teaches us to try and understand the feelings and the reasonings of those who do not believe—teaches us to try and do, what we always should do with those who differ from us, try and put ourselves in their place: try to understand how it is and why it is they do not agree with us: make all allowance for the honesty of their disbelief; try and enter thoroughly, if we can, into their motives and feelings. If we do not, we are in danger of becoming hard and unloving, and our contentions for Christ narrow and bitter and unjust—contending for Him, but not in His spirit—forgetting that there is not one of those who disbelieve in Him for whom He has not died—forgetting that the unbeliever is not an enemy to be driven back from the fortress of faith, but is an exile to be won back by loving words and earnest reasoning to the home of

his Father. As we look out from the fortress of our Christianity, lighted up with the light that we believe to be of Heaven, let us learn to see how the very light of it may be reflected back from the faces of its assailants. Let us strive above all things that in these sermons and in all our arguments for Christianity we may be filled with the Spirit of Him for whom we plead, and that while we manifest the truth we may manifest it in love.

We ask you, then, to contemplate this scene in which, as I have said, Christ is seen winning and losing disciples, and learn something for our own teaching from the facts there set forth.

The first thing we have to remark upon in this scene is this—how very little those who come and go seem to be influenced by what we should call “the evidences of Christianity.” Although, doubtless, they were drawn to Christ by the fame of His miracles, it does not seem to have been His miracles that converted them. It was “*as He spake these words, many believed on Him.*” Something that He said attracted them to Him. And again, when they left Him, it was not because they doubted about His miracles—not because they had detected in Him any inability to work miracles, but because something He said offended them. They came to Him not altogether in consequence of His miracles, and they left Him in spite of His miracles. What does this teach us? It teaches us again what I have said in the first place, that the religion of Christ was not received in the very first instance unquestioningly—not even because of His miracles—and that in spite of His miracles men ventured to question His doctrine. And, therefore, those who tell you that Christianity was received in an ignorant age, because men thought they saw miracles to prove it, say what is contradicted by the story of Christianity itself, and forget that many of those

who saw the miracles nevertheless rejected the worker of the miracles. But there is another reason why we should note this, and it is to observe the power of prejudice and passion in influencing men's beliefs and disbeliefs. There are very few men in this world who believe strictly in accordance with their reasoning faculty. The passions, the desires, the prejudices of men largely share in the making of their beliefs. And if this be true of their belief—and, unhappily, it is true—it is equally true of their unbelief. Are you quite sure (if there are those here who do not believe) that your unbelief is altogether the result of a calm and thoughtful and careful study of all that Christianity has to say for itself? Are you sure that you have not hastily taken up some objection against Christianity without waiting for the answer, or waiting to study the answer? Are you quite sure it has not been some word of Christ that you have misunderstood, as these Jews misunderstood it; some saying of Christ or of an advocate for Christ that has offended you, and that you turned away without waiting for the answer? Are you quite sure that there is no unreason in your unbelief, you who tell us so often that there is so little reason in our belief? It is because I am deeply convinced of this that, among other reasons, I am here to-night. It is because I do believe that misconception, prejudice, and the hasty adoption of other men's opinions upon very slender ground make a large part of unbelief, as I am ready to admit they make often too large a part of ignorant belief; it is because I believe that these misconceptions, these misunderstandings, these prejudices may be removed, that I am here to speak upon the subject which I have announced. It is because I believe it to be useless to argue against error until you have first stilled passions and removed prejudices; it is because I believe it to be as useless to argue with a man

determined not to hear reason, as it would be to cast seed upon that marble pavement, that I am here in these sermons not so much to deal with particular arguments, or particular portions of the evidences of Christianity, as to endeavour to remove those prejudices, those mistaken feelings or opinions, which make men unwilling even to listen to arguments for Christianity. Those who will follow me here will bring you many arguments for Christianity. I am about to-night but to lead the way, and if God may help me to do so, to prepare your minds to listen without prejudice to what they shall have to say.

And now I ask you to turn again to this story, and to see why it was that these new disciples left Christ. It was for this reason. They were offended, because He appeared to deny them the possession of liberty. When they had become His disciples, He said to them, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free;" and they answered Him, "We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?" He had offered them liberty, and that offer implied that they were not free, and this they regarded as the gravest of affronts. "What! we the children of Abraham—the very aristocracy of humanity—those whom the Lord delivered long ago from bondage in Egypt, 'with a mighty hand and with a stretched out arm,' whose slaves are we, that you venture to offer us freedom? The offer is an absurdity and an affront; you are denying us freedom by the very words in which you offer it." And so they left Him, and so they hated Him for what they deemed an insult to their birthright of freedom. Now we, understanding the story, can see how much these men were mistaken. We can see that our Lord was offering them moral freedom, and that they supposed He was speaking about political freedom. There

was a misunderstanding between Him and them as to the nature of liberty. He offered them a liberty they had no desire for, and He denied them the possession of a liberty, the nature of which they really did not understand. It was a dispute about liberty between Christ and these first free-thinkers.

Now, is there any like dispute, and may there not be a like misunderstanding now? What is the subject of my sermon to-night? It is, "Christianity and Free-thought." Now, before you came here, you knew what you meant by free-thought, or you thought you did, at least. You understood by free-thought something opposed to Christianity. By a free-thinker you understand one who rejects either all or part of Christianity. Why do such men give themselves this name? Because this name expresses their conviction that Christianity is opposed to freedom of thought—that it puts a restraint upon the freedom of the human intellect. The cry of such men is this: "Your Christianity shackles the human mind. I boast of my freedom. You require me to submit the freedom of my intellect to the authority of a book or of a man who lived years ago. My mind resists such attempts at fettering it. I submit to no authority. I reject all claim to overrule the very wildest freedom of my intellect. You priests, you bigots, who come to me with authority, and threaten me with penalties for daring to think for myself, you are convicting yourselves of falsehood before you utter another word. I cannot stop to listen to your evidences of Christianity, when upon the very face of it you bear this stamp of falsehood that you are opposed to freedom. You may say what you like about the evidence of prophecy or miracle: no evidence of prophecy or miracle will make me give up my freedom of thought." Have you never heard this? How often do you hear this

opposition insisted upon between the bigotry of the priest and the teacher of Christianity, and the "enlightened free-thought of the age!" Here, then, we have the issue distinctly raised between Christianity and free-thought. Let us understand it, then, very clearly, before we go further.

It is quite true that Christianity does come with a claim of authority. It is quite true that Christianity does say to men, "Believe this, because Christ has said it." He teaches men now, as He taught them, we believe, long ago, "with authority." And it is also true that Christianity does warn men of certain penalties, very heavy and grievous penalties, that will follow if they do not believe what Christ says. Christianity, then, has authoritative teaching, and teaching accompanied by a threat of penalties. That is perfectly true. Now we are told that here is just the point where Christianity comes into collision with free-thought. Free-thought will not endure to hear of authority, and resents the very idea of penalty. I think I have fairly put before you the issue between Christianity and free-thought.

Now, to understand this, of course it is necessary that we should clearly define to ourselves what is free-thought. The word is very often on men's lips now-a-days, but I am not quite so sure that men really understand what they mean by it. Let us try and understand it to-night. What is free-thought? Free-thought may mean one of three things. It may mean freedom as opposed to NECESSITY; or it may mean freedom as opposed to AUTHORITY; or it may mean freedom as opposed to RESPONSIBILITY.

As regards the first of these. By freedom as opposed to necessity we mean this—that a man is free to think in one way or another; that it is not an absolute necessity for him always to think in one way or another—that is to

say, that his thought is not a necessary product of his physical constitution; that his thoughts do not grow in him and out of him as the blade grows out of the seed, or the flower out of the plant—that thought is not mechanically necessary, but that a man has the power to will or choose how he will think. When we say freedom as opposed to authority we mean this—that a man is not bound to think in a particular way because he knows that somebody else thinks so: that is, that his thought is not to be subjected in any way to the thought of any other, and that he has a right to say to any teacher, no matter how accredited, “That is your opinion, but this is mine.” And the meaning of freedom as opposed to responsibility of course is this—that a man is in no way answerable for his belief, and that whatever he thinks about any subject, he is never to suffer for his thought in any way whatever. These are the only three possible meanings of free-thought. Let us take them one by one and see what Christianity has to do with each of these.

In the first place, freedom as opposed to necessity. Does religion deny—does Christianity deny—to men this freedom? On the contrary, it asserts and vindicates it. Christianity teaches that man is free—ay, terribly free—to will his own belief, when it teaches us that man is answerable for his belief, because men cannot be answerable for that over which they have no choice or power whatever. If a man has no more power over his belief than he has over the colour of his hair, then he is no more responsible for his belief than he is for the colour of his hair; but if he is answerable for his belief then that can only be because he has the power of choosing or willing how he will believe or think. And, therefore, the religion which tells you that man is answerable for his belief, tells you that he is free in his thought. And it is a very re-

markable and a very strange thing that it is the very people who call themselves free-thinkers—many of them at least—who most strongly insist upon the fact that man is not answerable for his belief; who are always telling you that man is no more answerable for his belief than he is for his height or the colour of his eyes. So you see it is these very men who in this respect are denying the freedom of thought, because you can only show that man is not responsible by showing that he is not free, for freedom and responsibility always go together. Christianity therefore in this respect, in this view of free-thought, so far from denying it, asserts it against many free-thinkers, and in this respect it is the Christian who is the real free-thinker and who maintains the doctrine of free-thought.

But, in the next place, it is said that freedom of thought is opposed to all authority; and we are told that thought cannot be free if it submits to authority. I ask you particularly to mark and to attend to this. It is quite true that the *abstract idea* or notion of freedom is opposed to the *abstract idea* of authority in thought and religion. Quite true. But it is equally true that these are so opposed in everything else. It is just as true in politics, that the *idea* of freedom is opposed to the *idea* of authority. Where there is absolute freedom, you cannot understand how there can be any authority, and where there is absolute authority, you cannot understand how there can be any freedom. If you start from the maxim, Man is free, you arrive logically at the conclusion that there can be no authority. If you start with the axiom, Authority is supreme, you arrive logically at the conclusion that there is no room for liberty. The two ideas, if you think of them in your mind, are logically opposed the one to the other; but are they so really in practice? Is it true that

freedom is found practically inconsistent with authority? Is it not true that men contrive to reconcile them every day and all day long? Is it not quite true, for instance, in the matter of opinion, that although opinion or thought is free, yet that thought is always submitting itself freely to authority? Have you ever considered how many of your most cherished opinions you are receiving on authority—not because you have proved them for yourselves, but because you have taken them from some one who you believe knows more than you do? You take the opinion of your lawyer on law as an authority; you take the opinion of your doctor on medicine as an authority; you take the opinion of your friends and neighbours on many points as an authority. Morality itself rests very largely on authority. We are always submitting ourselves to authority. So that though it is true that freedom and authority are opposed, if you come to think of them logically; yet it is equally true that there never was a case yet in which the two did not come together the moment you set them free. They are like those chemical elements which have a strong affinity for each other, and are never found apart in nature. You may find them apart in the laboratory of the chemist, who has analysed and separated them, but the moment you let them out of the laboratory they come together again. It is just the same with free-thought and authority. Men are always submitting themselves to authority. They do it readily. The more free a man's thought, the more readily and inevitably it submits itself to authority. The hardest thing in the world is to get men away from the influence of authority. They are always submitting themselves to it, and legitimately and rightly; for, if they did not do so, they would never know or learn anything; and when we speak of the authority of revelation, or of a teacher

who comes from God, we mean that he submits to the judgment of your free-thought his reasons why you should believe that he knows more about the things he has to teach than you do. This is really a part and a very large part of what is called the evidence of miracles. Men speak as if miracles were evidences of morals. We do not say that you are to believe our Lord when He says, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do unto them," because He works miracles; but we say that we are to believe Him, because He has come down into our world to tell us of another world of which He knows and we do not, and gives us evidence by wonder and by miracle, by bringing down the supernatural and showing it before our eyes, that He does know more than we do. Let me give you a simple illustration of this. Let us suppose that you were walking through one of the graveyards of this city in company with another, and that the discourse fell upon the resurrection of the dead, and that you were arguing that it was impossible—that there was no authority to prove it—and suppose that the person walking with you said, "I know more than you do about this; I know that there can be a resurrection of the dead; and I will give you a proof that I do know more than you do;" and suppose that stretching out his hand he bade the dead in that graveyard arise, and that they sprang up alive out of the earth where they had been sleeping, do you mean to say—is there any one in this congregation who would say, if he saw that miracle—that the person who had wrought it would be no authority on the question of the resurrection of the dead, or that it would be any tyranny over his free-thought to say, "Believe this person"? Your free-thought, because it is free, would immediately ally itself with the authority of the person who had done this thing. So you see freedom

of thought is not inconsistent with the authority we claim for the Christian revelation : for this reason, that the revelation submits its proof to your free-thought, and unless you accept its proof, of course you cannot accept its authority ; but if you do accept it, you do not lose your freedom ; on the contrary, you are asserting and acting upon your freedom. I am not saying now that I have proved these miracles of Christianity (that will be done by others), I only say that when in the name of these miracles we claim authority for information about the other world, we are not violating free-thought ; on the contrary we are appealing to your free-thought and your judgment. "I speak as to wise men : judge ye what I say."

Now, I come to the third idea of freedom,—that is freedom as opposed to responsibility,—and this is what I really believe most men mean, when they talk about free-thought as opposed to Christianity. They say, "You threaten us with penalties for disbelieving, and our whole soul revolts against this. Why ! it would be an unjust thing, it would be a tyrannical thing for a man to punish his fellow-man for his opinions ; *we* would not do that ; and do you mean to say God will be less just and merciful than man, and that God will punish us because of our opinions, when you admit that man would not and should not do so ?" Let us see that we clearly understand this. This objection goes upon the presumption that no man ought to suffer or be punished for his opinions : and with regard to this, I want you to consider two questions. Is it true that no man ought, under any circumstances, to be punished for his opinions ? And in the next place, is it true that men do not suffer for their opinions ? Is it true that no man ought to be punished for his thoughts ? Now, it is quite true that so long as he keeps those

thoughts to himself, locked up in his own breast, he will not be punished for them, for the simple reason that until the thought is known to be his thought, until he gives it utterance in some way, it is impossible for him to be punished for it; but if he does give it utterance, is he never to be punished for it? If a man utters a seditious thought, if he utters a libellous thought about his neighbour, if he utters a foul or indecent thought, is it true that he is not to be punished? Is it not true that he will be punished and ought to be punished for it? And why? Because this exercise of his liberty proves injurious to the general welfare; because his individual law of liberty comes into collision with a higher law, and must give way to it, the safety of all being of more importance than the freedom of one. But again, there are other penalties for thought besides those fixed by the law of the State. Society punishes a man's free-thought much more sharply than the law does. There are offences of thought and of speech, with which the law does not and ought not to meddle, but which society punishes very heavily. Let a man entertain uncharitable thoughts, suspicious thoughts, evil and unkind thoughts of his neighbours—let him not even utter them in speech, but show them in his manner and look—let his fellow-men know that he thinks ill of them or unjustly of them—and you know well how society visits on that man this exercise of his free-thought. There is not one here who does not know that if all the thoughts of his heart were laid bare before his fellow-men, he would pass a miserable (and it might be even an outcast) existence, because society avenges itself, in necessary self-defence, upon all such injurious exercise of free-thought. You see, therefore, that society, in its actings, as well as the law, does make men suffer for their thoughts. Take a step further. Pass

beyond civil law and the constitution of society, and think for a moment of the constitution of nature—of the laws which govern the universe. Do those laws allow of free-thought? Do those laws allow men to make mistakes concerning any of the facts of nature? Try it. Let any man think wrongly of any of the forces of nature, and let him see what nature will do. Let him freely think that fire does not burn or water drown, let him think that fever is not infectious, or that ventilation is unhealthy, let him think wrongly concerning any law of nature, and he will find that he will be visited by a sharp and merciless punishment. Those who talk about appealing from Christianity to the beneficent laws of nature forget this fact, that there are no laws so merciless,—so utterly unforgiving,—ay, and so utterly regardless of whether a man has transgressed ignorantly or purposely: he who transgresses ignorantly and he who transgresses wilfully, are alike beaten with many stripes. The great machinery of the world will not arrest its revolutions for the cry of a human creature who by a very innocent error, by the mistaken action of his free-thought, is being ground to pieces beneath them. Slowly, surely, relentlessly, eternally it moves on; oppose it in your free-thought, and it will grind you to powder. There is no room for free-thought there. Where then is there room for free-thought? Law restrains it, society punishes it, science laughs at it, nature crushes it out. And yet not without warnings too. Nature and science have their priests and their prophets. The man of science will warn you of the consequences of transgressing the laws which he has discovered. He foresees the judgment days of nature that may be coming in your life, and he tells you you are free, perfectly free, to think differently from him,—you exercise your own free-thought about it; but you do it at your own

proper peril,—you may refuse to believe him, your thought is perfectly free, but so surely as you do it you suffer for it. And, mark you, it is not his prophecy that has created the judgment. It is not his warning that brings down punishment upon you. It is not his book about sanitary laws that brings diphtheria or scarlet fever into your house. It is not the sinking of the mercury in the glass that brings on the storm. The written prophecy in the one case, the mute prophecy in the other, foretell the evil but they do not create it. Nature and science then have their warnings and threatenings of penalty, and nature and science avenge themselves upon free-thought. And mark this further: the more you lose sight of a personal will, the more you have to do with law and the less with the Lawgiver, fainter and fainter seems to grow the chance of forgiveness, less and less room does there seem to be for free-thought. Ah! there is something after all in that word, “I believe in God the Father Almighty;” there is something in knowing and believing in an omnipotent and loving will, that has the power to save the free-thought of an erring creature from the terrible punishment which comes from the soulless and merciless machinery of law.

And now that we have seen how little room there is for free-thought in this world of fact and this world of law, let us consider one thought and one fact more. Let us introduce into this world of existing facts and acting principles and forces one additional fact. Let us introduce the idea and the fact of a God. Let us suppose for argument’s sake that there is a God. Can it be possible that it should be a matter of indifference how men think about this new fact? Can you really suppose that it should be a matter of great importance, of terrible importance, to men how they think about the very least fact or power in

the universe, and yet that it should be a matter of no importance, a matter of the merest indifference, how they think concerning the great fact of all facts, the great cause of all causes, the great Lawgiver who gives all laws? Can it be a matter of indifference who He is, what He is, how He feels towards us, how we should feel towards Him? How can there be the possibility of thought without consequences, as regards God, if there be no possibility of thought without consequences, as regards the very least of God's works? Does it make no difference to us whether He is a father or a tyrant?—no difference to us whether He can or will not hear our prayer?—no difference to us whether He can or cannot suspend those terrible laws which we so dread? Is there really room then for this free-thought about God, and can we afford to dispense with any knowledge we have concerning this God, if there be one? Can anything show you more clearly the utter folly and absurdity of those words which I daresay many of you have heard in the last year, "Let us have religion without dogma—without theology. By all means let us have religion, but no theology." Is that one whit more sensible than, "Let us have sun, moon, and stars, but no astronomy; let us have plants but no botany; let us have chemicals but no chemistry; let us have the earth but no geology"? What is theology? It is the science of God. And if God be a fact—mark you, I say *if*—there must as certainly come a theology out of that fact as there comes a geology out of the fact that there is an earth. Science grows out of the facts with which it deals—grows out of them by a natural and necessary law of growth—and science, all science (not theology alone, but all science) is absolutely intolerant of any error respecting those root facts out of which it draws and according to which it develops its life. There cannot possibly be a greater

absurdity than for a man to talk of religion without a theology, unless that man by "religion" means something utterly different from what everybody else means by the word. By religion we mean something that teaches our obligations to a higher Being; and that there cannot be without theology. But, at any rate, if there be a God there must be a theology. Now I ask you just to think what is that creed of Christendom which we all repeat. Say it over to yourselves when you go home. Nearly every word in it is the assertion of a fact. "I believe in God the Father Almighty; in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord; conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary; who was crucified, dead, and buried, descended into hell, rose again from the dead, ascended into Heaven"—all these are assertions of facts. You may tell me these are not facts—that is another question; but all we say is, if they be facts, you are just as much bound to think rightly about these facts as you are about any other facts; and you think respecting *them* under penalties just as much and no more than you think under penalties concerning *other* facts. You are just as much bound to think rightly concerning the fact which we call God as you are to think rightly concerning any other facts. But, then, men will say, "Your facts are not so certain as those of philosophy and of science." We answer, it may be so to you, but it is not so to us; to us they are realities deep as the innermost core of our being; to us they are facts as certain as the great lights in heaven; we cannot conceive the possibility of our doubting them. But grant for a moment that all we can say is, *Perhaps* there is a God, *perhaps* there was an Incarnation; we have a right to say, if that *perhaps* prove to be a *certainty*, if what we think possible is really the case, then if you think wrongly about it, you will have to suffer the consequences of your

erroneous thoughts. If when the man of science puts into your hands a book which tells you of sanitary facts—of the danger of infection—if you say, as too many men do say, “We do not believe your facts, we are sceptical about your teachings, we will go on as we have done, we will suspend our judgment at least till you give us clearer proof”—what will be his answer? “I cannot compel you to believe; you may and must suspend your judgment if you do not believe, but meanwhile you will suffer; it may be the proof will come to you in sickness and death, but you will not escape merely because you suspend your judgment.” And we say to you, not in anger, not in bitterness, not in denunciation of God’s anger upon unbelievers—(God forgive us if we ever speak so)—but we speak to you in the same tone of warning and not of threatening, in the same tone of reasoning and of entreaty and not of denunciation, as the man of science does; and we say to you, “If you be doubtful, remember that while you are doubting, time is passing; if these be facts, then you are imperilled if you think wrongly about them; there is danger in darkness as well as in light; if you tell us you are groping in the dark, then we say take heed how you grope—take heed lest these facts prove hurtful and dangerous to you, if you come into collision with them. We cannot alter these facts. If they are facts, then they have a bearing upon your happiness, just as much as facts in the natural world have.”

You see, then, there is nothing incompatible with free-thought, there is no violation of free-thought in religion a whit more than there is in nature or in science. All we say to you is this—that the consequences of thinking erroneously concerning the facts of God’s nature may be as certainly perilous to you, as the consequences of thinking erroneously concerning the physical facts in your own

nature, or in the world around you. We grant you the right to doubt these facts, but all we say is that, when we tell you that error about these facts may be fraught with serious consequences to you, we no more violate the right of free-thought than does the physician who tells you that error about facts which he knows, and you do not know, may be fraught with most serious evils to your bodily health.

And now I trust that we have disposed—I hope you will think fairly—of that prejudice which lies upon the very threshold of our enquiry, that Christianity is opposed to free-thought. Then to sum up what I have been saying. If free-thought mean freedom as opposed to necessity, religion does not deny this; it asserts it. If it mean freedom as opposed to authority, religion does not create a contradiction between the idea of freedom and the idea of authority; and it is just as easy to reconcile the fact of freedom and authority in Christianity as it is in the State or in society. And if by freedom of thought you mean thought without consequences, there is no such thing either in society or in nature, and therefore you have no right to expect that it should exist in Christianity. Therefore we do maintain that in all that is really implied in the word “free-thought,” Christianity is not that which denies it, but that which asserts it. Christianity is that which gives you back the reality of freedom, although it gives you back with it the awful responsibilities of freedom. Christianity is that which gives you a possible escape from the soulless despotism of material law, in the merciful will of a loving Father. Christianity is that which prophesies for you a time when the mysteries which now cause your free thoughts to hang in suspense shall be cleared away. Christianity is that which gives back freedom to the conscience, vigour to the will; but with these it gives you

back, as I have said, the awful responsibilities of a free choice, and yet an infinite blessing in the power to make it. Christianity is that which reveals, ay, and proves to you great truths concerning yourselves and concerning God, and, bringing you to know these truths, "doth make you free."



CHRISTIANITY AND SCEPTICISM.

CHRISTIANITY AND SCEPTICISM.

PREACHED IN NORWICH CATHEDRAL, MARCH 29TH, 1871.

“The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe.”—ST. JOHN XX. 25.

OUR subject to-night is Christianity and Scepticism, and I have chosen for my text the words of a sceptic. As such St. Thomas has always been regarded. His name has become, in Church history, a proverb for unbelief. Amongst the typical characters that surround our Lord in the Gospel story, he has always been regarded as the type of the doubter; he is known as the doubting or unbelieving Thomas. And yet at first sight we hardly see why he should be so called. It is true that he doubted; but his doubt does not at first seem either so very unreasonable or so very obstinate that he should be called, by way of distinction, *the* doubter, *the* unbeliever. It was not unreasonable,—on the contrary, it was reasonable and natural,—that he should feel some doubt respecting the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Others had doubted as well as he, and they were called “fools and slow of heart to believe”; and yet they did not inherit the name of the doubters. Nor was his disbelief of a very obstinate kind. It seems to have yielded almost instantaneously to evidence, and immediately after he had seen what he asked to see, he gave utterance to a confession of faith which

was really in advance of his time,—he said more for Christ than many others of his disciples perhaps would then have said,—he said, “My Lord and my God.” He not only admitted His resurrection, but acknowledged His divinity; and yet he is called “Thomas the doubter—the sceptic.” And he is rightly so called. The Christian consciousness did not err when it gave him this name. For when he said those words, “Except I shall see . . . I will not believe,” he uttered that which is the very essence of scepticism. He suspended his belief upon a condition which destroys the nature of belief. He declared that he would not give his assent to the truth of Christ’s resurrection except upon this condition—that it should be made for him absolutely impossible to doubt. What he said to his brother disciples was in effect this: “You tell me that you have seen the Lord, but I cannot believe you. It does not matter how clear or precise your testimony may be, how truthful I believe you to be,—I will not be satisfied about that which you tell me until I see it for myself. I will not accept any testimony except that of my own senses.”

In short, he declared that his assent was only to be had upon absolute demonstration. And I say that this condition makes all belief absolutely impossible—belief in the proper sense of the word—for belief is *assent upon trust*. Where we have absolute demonstration of anything, the result is not belief at all. It is knowledge. What we see with the eyes of our body or of our mind we do not, properly speaking, believe in; we know it; we have for it the certainty, not of faith, but of science. Where doubt is absolutely impossible, there belief or faith is also impossible. You have certainty, but, as I have said, it is the certainty of knowledge; it is not the certainty of faith. Therefore if any one makes it a condition of his

assent to a proposition of any kind that it shall first be made as clear to him as that two and two make four, and if there be any truth or class of truths which *cannot* be made thus clear and plain—that is, if there be any truth or class of truths which cannot be demonstrated,—he who makes demonstration a condition of his assent must always be in doubt about that truth or class of truths—that is to say, he must always be respecting these a sceptic.

Now it is quite clear that the Christian religion is one of a class of truths which cannot be demonstrated scientifically. We cannot,—no one that ever lived could,—prove to you that there is a God in the same way that we can prove to you that two and two make four. We cannot do this, because the very idea of God is that He is invisible. The very first utterance of our religion is this: “I believe in that which I cannot see; I believe in the invisible God.” Clearly, therefore, he who says, “I will not believe anything that I do not see,” must always be a sceptic as to the truths of religion. Thus, although religion is by no means the only collection of truths which cannot be demonstrated, yet as it is the principal one, and as it is the one that especially deals with the invisible, it has come to pass that although there have been and are sceptics about other subjects and other beliefs besides religion, yet a sceptic is generally understood to be a man who doubts about religious subjects—a man who will not believe the truths of Christianity because they cannot be demonstrated in that way in which alone he thinks they should be demonstrated.

You see, then, I hope clearly, what a sceptic is and what scepticism is. By the word sceptic we do not mean simply an unbeliever in the truths of religion. A man may disbelieve every one of the truths of Christianity,

and yet not be a sceptic, because he may disbelieve them for this reason—that he believes something else that is different from and opposed to them. For instance, a Jew does not believe many of the truths of Christianity, and yet we do not call the Jew a sceptic. He believes in Moses, although he does not believe in Christ, and it is because he believes in Moses that he thinks he must not believe in Christ. In the same way we should not call a deist, a pantheist, or an atheist a sceptic. Every one of these has got a fixed and definite belief. Some of their beliefs we think very monstrous,—some of their beliefs we think make a greater demand upon their faith than ours does upon our faith. We think that the man who says there is no God is far more credulous, believes in spite of far greater difficulties and contradictions, than the man who says there is a God; but still he is a believer after his own fashion. He believes in what we think a perfectly monstrous creed, but he has a creed, and he is firmly convinced of the truth of it. He is not a sceptic then; he is an unbeliever, or, more properly speaking, a misbeliever: he believes something else than Christianity. Again, we do not call every doubter a sceptic. Every sceptic is a doubter, but every doubter is not necessarily a sceptic. A man may doubt the truths of religion only because he has not, as he thinks, sufficient evidence of the proper kind; but a sceptic is one who demands evidence of an improper and unreasonable kind. For instance—a man may doubt the truth of any assertion in history, for this reason, that he thinks he has sufficient evidence to show him that the historian, or the witnesses of the alleged fact, were untruthful or ill-informed. We should not call that man a sceptic, for he doubts reasonably. But if he were to say, “I do not believe this statement in history, because I doubt all human testimony; because it is

at least possible—you cannot deny that it is possible—that the person who years ago first told this story might have been a liar; and, inasmuch as you cannot give me positive proof that he was not a liar, I will not believe his evidence.” Then we should call that man a sceptic, because in matters historical he is demanding an impossible and an unreasonable kind of evidence.

I hope I have made it quite clear to you, then, that it is not doubt which constitutes scepticism; that what really makes a man a sceptic is,—not his doubt, but the reason for his doubt,—not that he asks for evidence, but that he asks for that kind of evidence which in the nature of the case it is neither possible nor reasonable that he should have. This is, properly speaking, scepticism. If you understand this clearly, you will see, in the next place, that as there may be doubt without scepticism, so, on the other hand, there may be belief, or at least assent, upon thoroughly sceptical principles. It is quite possible to be firmly persuaded of certain truths of religion, and yet to be in heart, though unconsciously, really a sceptic. Suppose, for instance, a man were to say, “I cannot believe in the existence of a God until I have it demonstrated as clearly as that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles;” and suppose that he were to invent for himself a proof which made this truth as clear to his mind as that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles,—then what is he? He really is in principle a sceptic, because it is quite clear that if he could not have made his proof thus mathematically certain he would have doubted of God; that is to say, all the time he assented to the existence of a God, his assent would have rested not upon any principle of faith or trust, but upon demonstration only; and that whenever the demonstration broke down—whenever the idea of a God

ceased to be a scientific certainty to him—he would begin to doubt again. Therefore it is perfectly clear that a man may believe or assent, as I have said, and yet be at heart a sceptic. And there is no doubt that this first assent of the Apostle Thomas was rendered upon thoroughly sceptical principles. He had said, “I will not believe—though all the other Apostles tell me they have seen Him, I will not believe until I thrust my hand into the side of my risen Lord”; that is to say, “I will believe nothing but the evidence of my own senses.” For his rebuke, and for our teaching, there was given him by his loving Lord the evidence that he asked; and thereupon he believed, but on strictly sceptical principles. He believed only because he had that evidence of sense that he asked for. And accordingly it is very remarkable that when our Lord gave him what he asked, He pronounced no praise upon his belief; He did not say to him what He had said to Simon, “Blessed art thou, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee.” Flesh and blood, and nothing but flesh and blood, had revealed the fact of the resurrection to Thomas, and therefore to him our Lord says, “Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.”

As it is possible, then, to doubt without being a sceptic, so it is possible to assent, and yet to be a sceptic still. Let us dwell a little on this point. It will help very much to illustrate and to explain what I am going to say to you presently, if we consider a little further this subject of believing doubt and sceptical belief. I shall illustrate it, or rather I shall ask you to test it for yourselves by the effect upon your feelings of what I am now going to say. It is this: **WE CANNOT DEMONSTRATE CHRISTIANITY.** It is utterly impossible that I can give you a demonstration of Christianity such as will leave no possible room for

doubt or question in your minds. When the advocates for Christianity who will follow me in this place shall have said all that they have to say—when they shall have put before you all the evidences of Christianity in their fulness and their variety—when they shall have shown you how reasonable it is to believe Christianity, how much more reasonable it is to believe than to disbelieve it—how many more difficulties there are in the way of disbelieving than in the way of believing it—when they shall have done all this, there will still be room for doubt in your minds; there will still be questions to be asked which they cannot fully answer, there will still be difficulties to be considered that cannot be entirely explained, and that no man that ever lived could entirely explain. We can give you the very strongest possible probability—we can give you the very highest degree of evidence *short of demonstration*—for believing Christianity; but *we cannot demonstrate it*. I say again, WE CANNOT DEMONSTRATE CHRISTIANITY.

With what effect does this announcement fall upon your hearts? Possibly upon some with a feeling of disappointment. You may have come to these sermons expecting to go away from them with your faith made as clear and certain to you as that two and two make four. You may exclaim—“If, after all you say, there is room for doubt, what do you mean by talking of evidence? Evidence leaves no room for doubt. I thought you were going to make my faith so certain that I should never doubt again. I thought you were going to answer all questions, to silence all objections, and to send me away with a mathematical certainty of every truth in my creed. What is the use of your evidences, if you cannot do this?” Our answer is: “If we could give you the same kind of proof that there is a God that we can give you that two

and two make four, then your religion would do just as much good as the knowledge that two and two make four. It would not cultivate that which religion was meant to cultivate in you, and that is the quality of faith—of belief in spite of doubt,—of assent in spite of difficulty.” What we have to say is this: “We cannot demonstrate Christianity to you, but we can give you sufficient reason for believing it, in spite of doubt.” What we have to say is this—and listen to it, you who believe in Christ: “The evidences of Christianity are weapons to be put into the hands of every one, with which every man and woman amongst you may fight out, if need be, in the temptation and hurry of life, or in the solitude of your chamber, upon your knees before God,—fight out in the innermost citadel of your soul—the desolating and besieging doubts that from time to time assail it.” This is the true use of the evidences of Christianity. They are not meant to be outlying forts far away from the citadel, beyond which the enemy is compelled to remain, and within which he may never come to assail your soul’s life; and if they were such impregnable forts, keeping off the enemy and saving you from the duty of fighting him in your own soul, then the result would be—not that the citadel would perish by the assault of the enemy—that would be impossible—but that the dwellers in the citadel would die for want of food. The faith that should be the nutriment of your souls would perish utterly, and your girdle of impregnable forts, your unassailable evidences, would at last enclose within their girth no living thing. The “shield of faith” is given you to carry upon *your own* arm, and with it to “quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one”; but you *must* carry it upon your own arm. Ay! even though your arm quiver with terror at the sight of the coming darts, it is upon your own arm and not upon that of

another it must be carried, if it is effectually to ward off the weapons that are aimed at your own heart.

But, on the other hand, there is in this fact a world of comfort for the doubter—the real, earnest, and distressed doubter—the man who would not doubt if he could help it, and who would believe if he could. For you we have this message: Christianity does not hate and excommunicate and repel every doubter. There was one who came long ago to Christ and said, “Lord, I believe; help thou mine *unbelief*,” whom Christ did not repel. What Christianity is intolerant of is not doubt itself, but the spirit of doubt; is not *unbelief*, but the demand for unreasonable and impossible conditions of belief. We do not tell you that you must stamp out every doubt and difficulty in your soul before you can become a Christian. We do not tell you that if you doubt on one point of faith you cannot possibly accept the rest; rather do we tell you that if you believe but one point of the Faith, and believe it on the principle of faith, you may yet come to believe all the rest. Our message to you whose hearts are weary with the labour of doubting is the word that Our Lord gave of old to the weary and heavy laden, “Come unto me, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.”

And now we can, I think, place ourselves distinctly at the point of collision between scepticism and Christianity. As we saw last night that the question between Christianity and free-thought is a dispute as to the nature of *liberty*, so we see to-night that the question between Christianity and scepticism is a dispute as to the nature of *certainty*. Scepticism demands certainty. Christianity offers certainty, and gives it in the end. But the certainty Christianity gives is the certainty partly of reason, partly of faith, and partly of experience, whereas the certainty that scepticism demands is the certainty of science only. Or

we may state it finally thus :—Every one, even the most extreme of unbelievers, will admit that there is something to be said for Christianity. Christianity is not altogether unreasonable and unworthy of a hearing as regards its evidences; for, after all, the men who have believed in Christianity during the last eighteen hundred years have not been precisely the greatest fools of their age. Leibnitz, and Butler, and Pascal were not exactly drivellers,—they were men capable of thinking, of weighing an argument, of understanding evidences. And not these only, but hundreds and thousands of the most powerful and subtle intellects that humanity has ever known, who in their day weighed the evidences of Christianity—ay, and weighed them in spite of doubt, and fought their way through every one of those doubts that are tangling round the feet of men now as they come to Christ—were not such utter fools, that any one is entitled with a wave of his hand to dismiss Christianity altogether as an absurdity and a folly. All who are at all reasonable will admit there is something to be said for the evidences of Christianity; and, on the other hand, every reasonable Christian will admit there is something to be listened to—something at least that appears at first sight reasonable and fair—in some of the objections to Christianity.

But the real question is this: The Christian says to the sceptic, “It is unreasonable of you to ask that every difficulty should be got rid of, and every question answered, before you believe Christianity.” The sceptic says to the Christian, “It is unreasonable of you to ask me to believe Christianity until you have set at rest every doubt and answered every possible question.” Now, I ask you to consider which of these is right, which is the reasonable demand—that of the Christian for faith upon sufficient, probable evidence; or that of the sceptic for

assent only upon scientific demonstration? This is our question to-night.

In order to argue this question fairly and calmly, without passion or prejudice, let us pass away altogether for the moment from the subject of religion and religious doubt, and let us consider the uses and abuses of doubt in other matters than religion. We all know that men do doubt and have doubted about many subjects besides religion. Try, then, and recall to your minds your first doubt. It will be long, very long, ago in your life. Your first doubt is only a little later than your first belief. The first instinct of the child is to believe everything—to believe that everything he sees, everything he hears, is true. All appearances for the child are realities. The sun is to him a ball of fire that climbs up the sky in the morning and sets in the evening. The stars are little specks of light set in a blue firmament. The earth is a flat space. The words of men are true words. Everything that appears to him at first *is*. Very soon, however, the child learns that what appears is not always what it appears, learns to distrust appearances, learns that under the appearance there is often a different reality; that is to say, he learns his first lesson of doubt. And very valuable and important is this first calling out of the instinct of doubt, this first awakening of the sceptical part of man—of his understanding. For the nature of the understanding is ever to ask the question “What?” and “Why?”—ever to seek under appearances for their cause or for their underlying reality. And so the mind of man, the sceptical, inquiring mind, is ever questioning of every apparent fact: “Is this what it seems?” and if it is, “Why is it so?” or if it is not, “Why is it not?” Thus doubt, precious and invaluable doubt, is ever leading man on from question to question, and every question that he

asks, if he can but gain from science the true answer to it, is ever leading him a step on in knowledge. The mind of man is ever asking, and nature and science are ever furnishing answers to his questions. So man goes on from belief to doubt, from doubt to belief, from belief to greater knowledge; and thus doubt is still the cause of progress, the implement of discovery, the spur to reformation, the motive power that is specially needed for the ever onward march of humanity in knowledge and science. Doubt! without this invaluable instinct of doubt humanity would be stagnant: with it, and by its help, humanity progresses. We do not disparage, we highly value, the uses of doubt.

But, observe! this doubt is useful upon one condition and one only—that it starts from a first belief. For what is the source of all this doubt and this thirst after knowledge? It is the supreme, instinctive belief that beneath all appearances there *is* a reality—that something underlies and causes all being. And it is the search after this (if I may so speak of it) Essence of Existence—the search of this I AM—that still leads on the doubter. If he had no faith in some underlying reality beneath all these phenomena, these appearances, there would be no progress; and so doubt is ever seeking for that which *is*, ever seeking to get below that which appears, and yet never reaches it. Never yet has scientific investigation, whetted and excited by sceptical enquiry, reached to the great reason of all reasons; the great cause of all causes; the great fact that underlies all facts. And yet ever, as we seek for it, we are advancing in knowledge. We do not reach *it*, but we are ever reaching and passing on beyond that which lies between us and it. So you see the action of doubt in the human mind is just like that of the mainspring in a watch. The mainspring of a watch,

as you know, is firmly attached at one end, and it is ever seeking to uncoil itself but yet never completely does so, and the result of this is that the hands of the watch move uniformly. If you cut the attachment the hands will give one wild whirl, and then be still and useless. It is just the same with faith and doubt in the human mind. Doubt is attached to the primary belief that there is a cause for all things, but it is ever seeking to escape from that belief ; it is ever trying to detach itself, but never succeeding ; and the result is there is a constant and a measured progress of the human mind.

But we have next to consider how much further the intellect, which thus has been ruling and testing our beliefs, may go. So far we have seen the intellect, the sceptical understanding in man—that in us which asks “Why?” and “What?”—acting as supreme judge and ruler, and all evidence as yet has been submitted to it alone. Now, the real question is this: Must it indeed be the sole rule and judge of all beliefs? Are there any beliefs that cannot be submitted to it alone? Are there any domains of knowledge and of certainty which cannot be reached by the sceptical intellect, and into which some other part of man’s nature must enter, to decide as to his belief? Let us go back to that early childhood of which I have been speaking, in which the child, who at first believes everything, learns his first lesson of doubt. A child, as I have said, not only believes in appearances, but he believes in testimony. He believes in human nature. His intuitive belief is in the truthfulness of humanity. Every word that is said to a child at first he believes ; but he very soon learns his second great lesson of doubt and distrust ; learns that everyone who speaks to him is not true ; learns that it is not wise for him to believe everything that is said to him. Is that as happy a discovery as that other discovery of

which we spoke? Does it lead to like happy results? Does it make the discoverer feel better, wiser, happier? Would you say to the child, "Go on, my child, in this progress of doubt and distrust; believe no one until he has proved to you that you must believe him. Doubt everyone, distrust everyone, refuse to accept any word of any human being until you have demonstration for it"? Would the man who grew up in that distrustful spirit be a happy man? Would he be a wise man? Is it wisdom always to distrust human nature? And yet, if it is not, I ask you what *demonstration* you can have of the truthfulness of every person whom you trust? You are always trusting. Can you prove logically that you are right in any of those trusts? The wife of your bosom may be false to you for all you can tell. The little children whose eyes look up to yours with such loving trust and whose laughter sounds in your ears like the music of summer brooks, you cannot prove that they are not hating you in their hearts. The friend whom you trust in business, you cannot prove logically that he is not a traitor and a rogue. Such things have been; we know they have. Men have been deceived by their wives, hated by their children, betrayed by their friends, and robbed by their men of business. It is quite possible that this may be so in your case. Are you therefore to distrust everyone? Would it be wise of you to do so? Why! you know that if a man were to act upon this principle and were to say, "I do not trust my wife, my children, my friends; I do not trust anyone until they prove to me, demonstrate to me, leave me in no doubt of their honesty, their love, or their truthfulness," you would not call him a wise man, you would call him a madman. You would put that man in a lunatic asylum. And why? Because, you would say, that he gave the surest evidence of madness; that one part of his nature had acquired a

diseased intensity, which had mastered all the rest. You would say that that man had gone mad with distrust and suspicion—had gone sceptically mad—and you would treat him accordingly. And yet I defy any one here to show logically that the man might not be right. I defy any one to give that man such a logical and scientific demonstration as would prove to him beyond all possibility of doubt that his friends, or his wife, or his children, were not in a conspiracy to deceive and to wrong him. You see, then, that there is an absolute necessity for trust in the ordinary affairs of common life.

But I pass on to another and still more important point. I have said, and I hope you see, that life must be conducted upon the principle of faith or trust ; but let us ask now, whether the rule of life, morality, can exist without faith—whether we can get a demonstrative or scientific basis for morality itself. I ask this question because those who are loudest in their prophecies of the destruction of religion are always loudest in their boasts of the gain to morality that would follow. They tell you, “When we have swept away every vestige of religion, then, and then only, will morality be really strong, free from the corrupting influence of religious superstition.” Let us consider this. Let us ask, How will morality bear the assaults of scepticism ? What is morality ? Morality is that code or rule of action which you follow in questions of right or wrong. It is something different from the moral sense or the power of *feeling* right or wrong : it is the power of *knowing* what is right or wrong. Practically it is the established code or rule of right and wrong in the society in which you happen to be living. This is morality for most men. Or if not this, it is the code (or rule) of right and wrong which each man forms or adopts for himself. Let us try how this code will resist the action of the sceptical

principle which, you remember, demands demonstration for everything before it believes—asks to see before it assents. I ask the man who says he has a system of morality, “What is it? Is it your own code, or is it the code of what you call the common sense or common morality of mankind?” I will take the last first, for that is what most people do say. Very few persons are bold enough to say, “Everything that I think about morals must necessarily be right.” On the whole, morality means what mankind generally think is moral. But I ask you first: “Have you ever got the universal sense of humanity upon any one question of right or wrong? Do you know that all mankind agree with you? Do you know that even the greater part of mankind agree with you? Have you ever submitted this particular question to the great majority of mankind? Have you got their answer? If you have, can you prove to me logically that the majority on any question of morals must always be right, and the minority always wrong? If men differ, and they do differ, on a great many moral questions, which is right—the majority or the minority? Or, again, whose morality is it that you will have? That of your own day or that of the past generation? These differ very much on many points. As you know, our ancestors approved of duelling and the slave trade. We disapprove of both. Which are in the right? I am not asking you which you *feel* to be right; but I am asking you which you can prove logically or to demonstration to be right. Or if you cannot decide the question by majority or minority—and I suppose very few persons would think of deciding a question of morality as they would settle the election of a member of Parliament, by majority or minority—how are you to decide it? “By asking what the opinion of the wise and good in all ages has been.” How are you to know the wise

and good? Before you can know the wise and good, you must know what wisdom and goodness are, and if you know what wisdom and goodness are, what need have you to look to the wise and good to tell you? "I question the wise and good, because I want wise and good opinions." But who are the wise and good? "Why, the men who give me wise and good opinions." Is that logical? Will that stand the test of sceptical enquiry? Is that what men call demonstration about morals? This appeal to the universal verdict of humanity is simply illogical and preposterous, for the reason that you yourself are a part of that universal humanity, and that, if you differ from its verdict, it is not the verdict of universal humanity, and if you agree with it, and take it because it agrees with your own, you might as well have taken your own in the first instance. As you cannot get out of this logical difficulty, then it comes to this—that each man is to decide entirely for himself and apart from all others what is right or wrong. Is it so? What is it then in us which decides what is right and wrong? Our conscience. It is an authority, then! And what about free-thought and authority? Why should man's free-thought, his sceptical intellect, submit itself to the decision of that in him which we call the conscience? Why, he knows that his conscience has been mistaken more than once—that at one time he thought that right which he now thinks wrong. Why must he submit himself, then, to these contradictory decisions of his conscience? Because we are told it is a part of his nature. But it is also a part of his nature to have passion and appetite. Give me a logical proof, a demonstration that will hold water, something I can see as clearly as that two and two make four—that one part of my nature is to yield to another part. Why am I to mutilate one part of my

nature at the bidding of another? And who and what am I? Have I any logical demonstration as to what I am? I have a scientific demonstration, if you like, and what is that? Why, that I am carbon, and lime, and phosphorus, and certain other chemicals put together, after a particular fashion. No dissector has ever dissected out a soul—no man of science has ever demonstrated a spirit or a conscience. Then, I ask, why am I to obey the bidding of one convolution of my brain more than that of another? Or if my interests come into collision with the interests of another man—that is to say, another mass of carbon, lime, and phosphorus—what is there in the existence of that collection of chemicals (and, mind you, science tells you no more than that) which gives it the right to give a law to that other collection of chemicals which I call myself? What is the duty that I owe to that mass of chemicals? I owe nothing to it. You cannot demonstrate it—you cannot make it as clear as that two and two make four—that I am to do to another man what I would he should do unto me. “Duty!” “Right!” These are words of the spirit, of the soul. Science never yet revealed the soul, and therefore the man who will believe nothing but what he sees and what can be demonstrated to him will deny at last the existence of duty, in obedience to his sceptical intellect, just as he begins by denying the existence of God for the same reason.

Now, I ask you, how do you get out of this difficulty? I know that many do, and I thank God for it. I am very far indeed from saying that every man who denies Christianity must necessarily be an immoral man. We thankfully acknowledge that, as men may be worse than their principles, so they may be far better than their principles; and we do most firmly believe and thankfully acknowledge that men who are not Christians extricate themselves

from this logical difficulty. But how do they do it? They do it just in the same way in which men extricate themselves from difficulty and doubt and scepticism in the affairs of life. They extricate themselves by calling up another instinct of their nature to fight the instinct of doubt: they call up the instinct of faith. How does a man in practical life fight the sceptical instinct which bids him doubt his fellows? He appeals to the instinct of faith. He says—"I *will* believe,—I *will* silence this busy devil in my heart that is ever bidding me doubt of what is holiest and best; I will to believe in human nature; I will to silence these sceptical questions of the mere understanding; I will to believe in a higher and nobler humanity."

And so it is in the matter of morality. How is it that any one can extricate himself from the logical and scientific difficulties that I have been speaking of? He does so in one way and one only. He does it by an act of faith. He rises up to a belief in a nature and a person—in his own personality and in his own higher and better nature. He *wills* to believe that he is something more than a compound of material elements. He *wills* and chooses to believe that conscience in him is something supreme and divine. He *wills* and chooses to believe that the man in him is something above the animal. And by an exercise of faith,—of faith in himself, of faith in his own higher and better self—and by this alone, he silences the eternal "Why?" of the sceptical intellect—the serpent in him "more subtle than any beast of the field," which, if it had its way, would make of every man nothing but a beast; the sceptical understanding, which, taking its retaining fee from the passions and the appetites, ever seeks to reason away the supremacy of the conscience—to justify the revolt of man's appetites against his own higher and

spiritual nature. This is the only way of escape from the difficulties which the sceptical intellect raises against morals, against society, against law, against all that makes life endurable or lovable, quite as much as it does against religion itself.

And now I have one and only one more question to ask. Having shown you, I hope clearly shown you, that there are subjects in which the sceptical intellect is not the only judge,—that there are domains of human knowledge and human life into which, if doubt comes at all, it must come as a servant and not as a master—having shown you that scepticism is really nothing else than the intrusion of the merely sceptical understanding into the province of the soul,—it remains only to ask this question: Is religion, is Christianity one of those subjects in which the understanding is not to be the only judge, but in which the soul and the heart of man are to have something to say about his belief? Surely you see at once that if Christianity be what it professes to be—a life,—it is quite clear that, like all human life, it must be conducted upon a principle of trust; that if we cannot live our ordinary human life without trusting where we cannot demonstrate, neither can we live the spiritual life without like trust. Observe! I am not saying that because you must, in Christianity, trust where you cannot demonstrate, that therefore you are to take everything upon trust and to ask for no proof, any more than I say you are to do the same thing in natural life. There may be circumstances and facts in natural life that may make the most unsuspecting and trustful man lawfully suspicious; and it is conceivable that there may be circumstances or facts in Christianity that should make even Christians suspicious and distrustful. We do not think there are, but I am not now saying that there are not; I am only insisting that we should not

in the Christian life believe only on demonstration, unless we are equally prepared to say that we should believe only on demonstration in the natural life.

If Christianity be, as it professes to be, a spiritual life, if that life be a union, the deepest and most intimate of unions, between the finite spirit of man and the infinite spirit of his Heavenly Father, the Almighty God, then must that life be full of mystery, full of insoluble questions. Have you ever solved the mysteries of your own life? Have you ever fathomed the depths of your own spirit? And if you think of that mysterious life of yours being brought into close relationship with the divine, eternal, and infinite life, can it possibly be other than that out of the meeting place of those two mysteries there should grow mystery and difficulty? Why, the very fact that Christianity is a revelation—professes at least to be a revelation—of fresh truths concerning man and God suggests the expectation that it will bring forward fresh difficulties, fresh mysteries. The telescope of the astronomer, you know, resolves this or that nebula, this or that cloudy mystery in the heavens; and what seems but a cloud resolves itself into worlds. But, then, as the telescope brings nearer to you and so resolves this nebula, in that very act it brings into the field of view some other far off, dim, nebulous mystery of the heavens, which it does but bring to view and has not the power to resolve into its constituent elements. So is it with Christianity. The eye of faith, aided by the power of revelation, resolves, it may be, this or that mystery of our being, but it does so by bringing into the field of view the remoter and dimmer mysteries of the heaven of our belief. Yes, Christianity is a life—a spiritual life,—and, therefore, it must be fraught with its own difficulties and its own mysteries. Christianity must have that in it which shall provoke the

sceptical intellect. All we ask for it is, not that men should ask no proof, not that they should not ask reasonable proof, nay, a very large amount of reasonable proof, but that they should not deal with Christianity in a different way from that in which they deal with other and kindred subjects,—with human life, with human morality,—that they should not have faith for these and scepticism only for that. We say, “Be consistent in your scepticism.” If you will doubt religion for purely sceptical reasons—doubt for sceptical reasons all other things about which doubt is possible; but if you tell us that you can exercise faith in those other things, then do not tell us beforehand—before you hear a word of evidence—that it is impossible for you to exercise faith in religion.

If you will say to us of religion, “I must see everything before I believe anything,” then carry that principle out in morality and life, and see what comes of it. But if in morality and in life you can say, “I will not insist on seeing all before I believe; nay, my deepest wisdom is often to believe in order that I may see,” then adopt the same principle in common fairness as regards religion. We do not ask you to believe without evidence,—we do not ask you to believe without a large amount of evidence, but we do ask you to do in religion with your sceptical intellect what you do in morality, and what you do in the ordinary affairs of life. Suffer it, if you will, to accompany you up to a certain point, but at that point you must say to it, “Here we part.” If we must say in morality, if we must say in life, “There is that which I believe though I cannot see,” have we the right to say with respect to religion, a kindred subject, an essentially analogous subject: “I shall only believe what I see”?

And yet remember this—that when we ask you to

believe before you see all, it is that you may at last see and experience all. Christianity has a demonstration, but it is one that comes not before, but after, belief. Christianity has a certainty, but it is one which comes not as the condition but as the reward of faith. There is a "demonstration of the Spirit"—there is an evidence of the divine life in the soul of the believing Christian which he cannot demonstrate to others, because it is invisible as his own soul and spirit, and yet which he feels to be the very core and life of his inner being: it is the "strengthening of his inner man" by the Spirit of Christ. Christianity is a great experiment, a probable, a reasonable experiment, but still an experiment. Christianity is a great remedy, a probable, a reasonable remedy, but still a remedy to be tested in the taking of it. Try the experiment. Try it with the conditions under which alone it can be successful. Try it with the purity which He blessed who said: "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." Try it with a simple and earnest desire to ascertain its truth. Try it, casting aside for the moment the terrible interest that the merely sensual and profligate man has in the untruthfulness of the revelation that restrains his lawlessness. Try it, as He bids you try it who bids you come to Him, even as a little child. Try it thus, and see if there does not come into your soul that deep conviction, not created by science, not begotten of the logical understanding, but welling up from the innermost depths of your being, that shall be to you "a well of water springing up to everlasting life." Try it. See if what He promises be not true; that, though there is no rest for the sole of your foot either in morality, in life, or in religion, if you will insist on seeing before you believe; yet that, as in life, as in morality, so also in religion, "Blessed are they who have not seen and yet have believed."

CHRISTIANITY AND FAITH.

CHRISTIANITY AND FAITH.

PREACHED IN NORWICH CATHEDRAL, MARCH 30TH, 1871.

“Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.”—
ST. JOHN XX. 29.

LAST night I endeavoured to show you what scepticism is, and what it leads to. We saw that scepticism is not simply doubt, but that it is doubt of a particular kind. It is that state of doubt which arises from insisting upon referring every question for solution to one part and one only of our nature—to the sceptical understanding. It is that state of doubt which arises from refusing to believe until it has been made impossible to doubt. And we saw what this leads to. We saw that it necessarily leads to the destruction of all belief properly so called—to the destruction of every kind of assent except assent to scientifically demonstrated fact; that it is fatal to all belief that rests upon moral as distinguished from scientific certainty, and that appeals to any part of our nature except the understanding—all belief with which the heart and the spirit of man have anything whatever to do; and therefore fatal to all that higher and nobler life which arises out of such beliefs. We saw that scepticism, for instance, is essentially fatal to morality; because there is no absolute demonstration of morality, and that in order to be moral it is necessary to exercise an act of faith. And we saw, further, that inasmuch as religion, like

morality, is incapable of scientific demonstration; as it *does* appeal to something else in man than the logical faculty; as it *does*, like morality, appeal to man's heart and spirit and conscience; it, too, cannot justify itself absolutely to the sceptical intellect; so that scepticism is necessarily as fatal to religion as it is to morality. And, therefore, I hope you now see clearly what a mere waste of time it is for the Christian to endeavour to satisfy the consistent sceptic. They have absolutely nothing in common. It is quite impossible that religion can satisfy scepticism unless it cease to be religion and become a science; and it is just as absurd to object to religion that it is not science, as it is to object to science that it is not religion. The wisest course, therefore, that we can take, in dealing with those who call themselves sceptical, is to begin, and for the most part to end, the discussion by asking this plain question, "You tell us that you are sceptical, and you demand that all your doubts shall be satisfied before you believe. We ask you, Do you yourself believe in anything; and, if so, *why* do you believe in it? Do you believe at all in the proper sense of the word? Do you assent to anything upon trust? Is there anything whatever that you believe, although you cannot demonstrate it? If so, then you have no right to say to us, 'We will believe nothing of your religion until you can demonstrate it.' But if you say to us, 'We believe in nothing that cannot be demonstrated,' then all we have to say to you is, 'We will really have nothing to answer; we must leave you to be refuted by the common sense of mankind, and by almost every act of your daily life, which is based upon trust of some kind or other.'"

It would save a vast deal of time if we were to take this course. Let me earnestly advise all Christians who may be listening to me, before they allow a sceptical opponent

to put them upon the proof of *their* faith, to ask him first of all for *his* faith. Say, "What is it that you believe? And remember, we will not allow you to bring against our faith any objection that applies equally against yours. We cannot allow that you should have faith for all the difficulties attending *your* belief, and ask *demonstration* for all the difficulties attending *ours*. Faith for both or faith for neither : but not *faith* for one, and *demonstration* for the other."

And the reason why I press this upon you is, not that you may gain a logical victory over your opponents—that is the very poorest of all ambitions,—but in the first place that you may see how the very same objections that are brought against your belief lie, many of them, against any and all belief, and so be strengthened in your own faith : for, after all, the most part of men *do* believe—ay, and *must* believe something. There is a necessity of belief in the soul of man, which it is very hard to stamp out by any arguments. In the next place, we urge it upon you for the sake of your opponents—for the sake of those whom you would *win*, and not merely *silence*. It may do them good if you throw them back upon considering what is the basis of their own belief; showing them if you can—and be very thankful if you can show them—that, unconsciously to themselves, while they call themselves sceptics, they really are, in some degree, believers.

Having endeavoured clearly to show you that religion, like morality, has no answer, properly speaking, to scepticism, because, like morality, it rests upon an act of faith, let us return to that point at which we left off last night—the point where we saw that, in order to be moral, in order to believe in morality, we must exercise faith. As I showed you, we must, by an act of faith in ourselves,

in our own higher and better nature, an act which never can justify itself to the understanding—we must submit the understanding to the soul; must elevate the conscience above the merely logical and questioning faculty; must say, by the help of that instinct of faith which is given us for the very purpose of rising above the instinct of doubt—"In spite of all that can be pleaded to the contrary, I *feel*, I *know*, that this is right and this is true."

Now, as I have said, there is in the heart of every human being an eternal opposition between the merely sceptical understanding and the spiritual faculty, between that which demonstrates and that which believes, between the mind which we share with the animal and the spirit which we believe we specially derive from God. These two are opposed one to the other. And that in us which says, "This *must* be so, this *shall* be so!" is a higher faculty than that which says, "*How* is this so? *Why* is this so?" and the act of faith on which our morality, our religion, our higher forms of being and living rest, is that by which we assert the supremacy of the one of these above the other. It is true, we are not always conscious, perhaps we are not often conscious, of this contradiction in our innermost being, of this opposition between the spiritual part of our nature and the merely fleshly mind; but there are times when we become conscious of it. There are times when there comes to each one of us some dire and deadly temptation, when we find ourselves in the presence of some object of desire that hangs before us like the tempting fruit in that story which unbelievers regard as the vainest of all fables, but which we believe to be the deepest of all truths, when the animal in us craves its gratification, and the spirit in us trembles at the thought that the thing desired is unlawful; and when

beside that forbidden fruit we find that serpent intellect of which I spoke last night, with its ingenious sophistries, its subtle pleadings that after all the thing is desirable, that there may be no law against it, that there ought to be no law against it, that there *shall* be no law against it. There is not a man in this church to-night who has not felt at such a moment the opposition between the spirit and the flesh in him ; has not felt that his deliverance from temptation, his mastery over the evil power that is winning him to evil, lies not in logic, not in demonstration, but in the submission of the logical faculty to the spiritual, in the resolve to say to the subtle pleading intellect, "Be silent ! submit ! I *will* be righteous ! I *will* not sin." I say it is in such a moment that we become conscious of the opposition which really exists between the merely intellectual and the spiritual part of our nature. It is as the great tides in our souls are ebbing and flowing in the agony of our temptations that they leave bare the very foundations of our being, and we see the yawning chasms in our nature that are hidden at other times in its undisturbed depths. It is in such moments, in the utterance of that word "I WILL," which is indeed a word of faith, that the first ripple of the returning tide of virtue flows back, to rise and swell to its fullest height—the upswelling tide of love and grace and truth. We are, however, for the most part unconscious of this schism in our nature. It is with us in this matter as it is in what oculists tell us of the nature of our eyesight. They tell us that the image upon the retina of the eye is drawn inverted, and that it is only by a frequent and unconscious habit of correction that we see things in their true position. And so there is a natural inversion in the moral nature of man. The animal naturally gets the upper hand of the man ; and it is only by the training—by the habitual and uncon-

scious training—of man in a Christian society, that the habit of the supremacy of the moral part of our nature is in most of us so strongly established that we are scarcely conscious of the act of faith we are habitually performing; yet this faith underlies all morality. There is no righteous deed that any one of you ever did that you did not do, consciously or unconsciously, by virtue of an act of faith. It is just as true in morality as it is in Christianity, that “the just shall live by faith.”

And now let us pass on to another question. If it be a fact that our whole moral and religious life is based upon faith, there doubtless must be some good reason for this: at least we Christians believe that, if our Heavenly Father has made us so, He has made us so with a reason. Can we see any reason, then, why we should be thus called upon to live all our moral life by faith? Consider what faith is. Faith, as I have said, is not assent to propositions. It is trust in a person—in a nature. Its first act is a belief that we are better and nobler than our understanding would persuade us that we are. Now, every time that this opposition that I have been describing arises within a man, a choice is given him, he passes through a probation as to whether he will or will not believe in his better self—as to whether he will rise up to the height of his spiritual nature, or sink down to the depths of his animal nature. There is a trial, and a discipline in the trial; there is a culture and a growth of his moral nature if it stand the trial. We cannot believe in our nobler and better selves without becoming, in the very act of believing, nobler and better. Out of every such strife between the beast and the man, the man comes stronger than he was before the struggle. Every time that man wrestles with his baser self his purer and nobler

self grows nobler and purer still. Yes! there is a deep meaning in that picture of old, where the Tempted One is described as being with the wild beasts in the wilderness. In the hour of sore temptation, when he wrestles for the dear life of his soul with the wild beast within him, out of that struggle does the soul of man grow strong. It needs such trial, just as the branches of a tree need the tossing of the wind that the sap from the root may be made to reach to its tiniest leaflet, and bring the life-blood of the plant through all its members.

This, then, you see is the nature of this primary act of faith. It is in every case a probation and a discipline; for the man may choose, and he must choose, which part of his nature he will follow, and he cannot choose the better part without becoming thereby better. Thus, the use and object of faith is to discipline and train and elevate the man.

But let us take a step further. I have said that in every case in which a man believes in his better self he thereby becomes better. But we have to deal not only with our own higher and better selves; we come constantly into contact with other natures and other personalities than our own. Now, in every case in which you or I encounter a higher nature than our own, what happens? Just the very same trial, just the very same discipline over again which occurs when we are dealing with our own selves. For when we come to deal with or to know a higher nature than our own, there is always this trial to the lower, that it cannot perfectly understand the higher nature. You can easily see that the higher nature, just because it is the higher, cannot be perfectly understood by the lower and less perfect nature. If it could be perfectly understood, the two would be equal. It is of

the very essence, therefore, of the higher nature to be something of a mystery to the lower. "The light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." The animal that comes nearest to man, if it could speak, would tell us of much that seems to it utterly perplexing and incomprehensible in the human nature; so the human nature that comes in contact with a much higher one must find in it much that is perplexing and even distressing. In every such case what happens? A trial whether the lower nature will recognize the good that it sees in the higher—whether it will believe that nature to be really higher than itself. There is always the possibility of its saying, "This nature after all is no better than mine; I do not believe in its higher or greater goodness." Have you never known among your friends and acquaintances men much in the habit of disparaging others, of impugning their motives, of lowering their characters—whose boast it is to be shrewd and worldly wise, who tell you, "We are not easily imposed upon; it is all very well to tell us of this or that man being so very good; we know better than that; the man is no such great saint, he is no better than a great many of us; we know the world a good deal better than to believe that"? Do you know any such men, and do you generally find that they are the most improving and valuable of your acquaintances? Do you find them generally men of the highest and purest tone of mind? Or do you not generally find these cynical, bitter, disparaging persons, men of a low tone? Are we not tempted to say to them: "You are judging others by yourselves, and it is because your own nature is so low that you cannot give anyone credit for being better and higher than you know yourselves to be"? Do you not see?—these men have actually lowered their own nature; in their hour of probation they have sunk lower

than their former selves, because they have refused to believe in anything higher and better than themselves. But if, by an act of faith, these men could have risen to believe that the nature they were dealing with was a nobler one than their own, in that very hour their own being would have grown nobler, higher, purer; just in the measure that they appreciated good in another would they themselves have become better. So you see that an act of faith for such men would be an act of discipline, of moral culture and growth: for these, as for the individual man dealing with himself, it would be and it is most deeply true, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

We have seen that in all morality there is faith, that in all faith there is discipline and culture. But is there not something further that we may see and aim at? We who believe in the existence of higher natures than our own, in greater measures of justice and righteousness and truth than we ourselves possess—is there not in the heart of every one of us an instinctive belief that there must be somewhere perfect righteousness, perfect truth, perfect holiness? We seek for it. We believe in it. Do we ever find it? Do we not find that the more we know of men, although we may know more of their excellences, we are compelled to know something more, too, of their imperfections? Assuredly we find that no one of our acquaintances, even the very best and highest, is free from imperfection. Now, when we make this discovery, what happens? One of two things happens, according as we listen to our understanding or to our soul. If we listen merely to the sceptical understanding, what is the answer we get? That there is no such thing possible as absolute righteousness; that history never revealed and that our own experience contradicts it; that what we call

sin is only the necessary imperfection of creature life, and that there is therefore no such thing as individual perfection. This is the conclusion of the understanding, and it is unanswerable, if you look only to experience. But is this the answer of the soul and of the heart of man? Why, you know how the soul and the heart in you rebel against this cheerless teaching. The soul of man has ever been uttering its protest against this despairing creed. It has ever been speaking out, in one form or another, its belief in the reality of a perfect righteousness, a perfect truth, a perfect holiness, if it could only attain to it. It is ever reaching out after it as a plant reaches, and twines, and creeps towards the light; and this very going out of our soul after it is itself a proof of its existence. It may be a dream, we are told it is a dream—this idea of absolute perfection—but it is a dream that has haunted humanity from the hour of its existence. It may be a dream, but still we feel it is a dream, not of the night but of the dawning. It is a dream that has in it the prophecy of an eternal day. Ay, and this belief comes to us with that twofold mark that stamps every true act of faith, namely—trial and culture. It comes to us in the first place with the mark of discipline; it is belief in spite of difficulty—it is belief that cannot justify itself to the understanding. The heart of humanity has believed in the possible perfection of man, in spite of the sad disproof of ages of sin and wrong and misery and oppression. The long litany of man's sorrows and sighs comes down to us through all the ages with a wail of despairing denial of the possibility of perfection. Remedy after remedy has been tried for the evils of society, scheme after scheme has been invented for their prevention, and yet they confront us still as darkly as ever. Yet still the heart of man clings unwaveringly to the belief that there is perfect goodness

somewhere, though science fails to demonstrate, and civilization fails to bring it; in spite, for instance, of the scenes of the last few months, though we have seen the most civilized and cultivated nations of the world banding themselves for mutual destruction, and the fairest plains of Europe deluged with the blood of the best of her sons—in spite of this despairing disproof of perfection, the heart of man clings to its faith in it still. We *do* believe; we still have faith in humanity. Then there is this other proof of the truth of this faith, that it elevates the soul that believes in it. This belief in the possibility of delivering man entirely from sin or sorrow, of finding perfect holiness and righteousness for man, is something more than the dream of the poet or the utopia of the philosopher. It is that indwelling might in the heart of the earnest worker, that gives him strength to do his daily deeds of mercy and of self-denial. It is this that makes men ready to suffer and toil and die for their fellow-men. It is the vision of the travail of their soul accomplished, the same vision that hung before the dying eyes of Him we worship—the vision of Him who, as He was dying, saw of “the travail of His soul and was satisfied.” It is a faith that cannot justify itself to the understanding—a faith that the sceptical part of man laughs and sneers at—and yet it is a faith deep as the human heart and old as humanity.

There is then in very deed and in a very true sense, although it be a low sense comparatively, a religion of humanity. There is a creed and an act of faith for men, even before they enter within the temple of the Most High. There is an altar at which men do worship to the Unknown God—ay, and bring costly sacrifices too. Thank God for it, and let us lovingly and thankfully recognise the fact. And this religion has for its creed

these articles—"Man is free; he is not a machine," "Man is moral; he is not a bundle of passions and appetites," "Man is responsible; he has to answer for his beliefs," "Man may yet be perfect." This is the creed of natural Religion. There is not an article in it that can justify itself to the sceptical intellect, and yet there is not an article in it that the heart of man, in its highest and best moments, does not cling to as the very life of its life. "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

And now we take one step further. We have seen that there is a faith that underlies all morality as well as all religion, and that this faith is ever working the discipline of the soul, and that without it there is no growth either in morality or in religion. Now let us suppose—suppose only for argument's sake—that for this yearning of the soul, this believing and aspiring desire for an infinite perfection, there is a corresponding reality. Let us suppose for a moment that there is what the soul of man has believed in in all ages,—an absolutely perfect, a supremely righteous and holy Being. Let us suppose again that it pleased Him to make of Himself a revelation to man; what should we expect beforehand concerning that revelation? Should we not expect that it would follow the analogy of all other revelations to the higher and better part of man's nature; that this manifestation of the Perfect One would be of a kind that would at once test and cultivate our moral and spiritual nature; that is to say, would come in such a way as to call for an act of faith? Should we not expect beforehand that if this were a revelation of a perfect nature, it would appear to our lower natures in some respects unintelligible, in others mysterious, in others (even as our own nature appears to us in some points of view) self-contradictory? For all myste-

ries, everything that we cannot understand must come to our understanding in the shape of two contradictory propositions; we view the thing on two opposite sides, because we cannot see it all round and at once. Well, then, should we not expect that this perfect nature, in the revealing of itself to us, should thus try our faith? If it would be unreasonable to expect that an inferior man should thoroughly understand and appreciate a higher and a better man than himself, is it unreasonable to suppose that we might find some difficulty in perfectly appreciating the nature of the one supremely Perfect Being? Should we not expect, judging from analogy, that we might have some difficulties of the same kind in understanding God that we have in understanding one another; that there would be the same trial of our faith, the same testing whether we would choose to think better or worse of God—the same probation and discipline of our spirit when brought to apprehend that perfect nature? Surely, we should beforehand expect that this would be the case. Surely we might say beforehand that a God whom every one could thoroughly understand, who was as easy to comprehend as a proposition of Euclid, could not be the true God, inasmuch as the human beings whom we believe to be made in His likeness are not thus easily intelligible to their fellow-men. When any one says that he must have a God without mystery, ask him, “Do you know a man who is not a mystery to you? Are you not a mystery to yourself? And yet you say you will not believe in God, the Maker of us all, until you can thoroughly understand Him!” Why, a God whom you could thoroughly understand would be no God. He dwells in light—in ineffable light. In Him there is no shadow of darkness. But it is light which (from its very brightness) no man can approach unto. We maintain, therefore, that if there be

a revelation of God at all, it must be one that shall try the faith of man.

But we should expect, also, that it would be a revelation of God by means of *a person*, because we know that the highest tendencies of our being, at its best moments, are ever to find *a righteous* personality; we should expect, therefore, that if there came to us a revelation of God it would not come merely in the form of certain propositions or doctrines, but in the manifesting of a nature. Now we Christians say that we have this. We say, in the first place, that there is given us a revelation of the working of a Divine will, and the purposes of a Divine Designer, in the works of His hands. We believe that His invisible things are revealed by the visible; that there is that in the world around us which testifies to a Creator and a Designer. We say we believe this, because there is an instinct in us, which for every work of art supposes an artist, for every design a designer. We say that "the heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handywork"; that "day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge." Yet we also say that this revelation follows the law of all other revelations to faith; that there must be a possibility of denying it. There must be a probation, there must be a discipline here as in every case in which faith is called into play; and, therefore, although the world reveals, it does not demonstrate its Maker. The heavens *are* declaring His glory and the firmament *is* showing His handywork, and day unto day *is* uttering speech, and night unto night *is* shewing knowledge;" but the speech is—like the speech of all things spiritual—speech to those who *will* to hear it; the knowledge is still for those who choose to receive it; if men will, they may put it from

them. Yes, it is an awful power we possess of refusing to see God. There is nothing, there can be nothing, God has willed there shall be nothing in the world, that shall *demonstrate* Himself, that shall make it impossible for man to doubt of His existence. It is now as it was of old. Inasmuch as men did not *choose*—oh! mark this word—to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind. There is a necessity even in this first and simplest manifestation of God that it should try the faith of man.

Once more; we Christians believe not only that God has revealed Himself in His works, but that He has revealed Himself in His Word—in His Incarnate Word. We do believe that, in answer to the craving desire of the soul of man to look upon human perfection, this earth has once been visited by a perfect man. We do believe that in the story of the Gospels we possess that which no imperfect human soul could ever have imagined—the lineaments of a perfect human being. We do believe that in this picture which friends and foes have looked upon almost with equal admiration, if not with equal love, we possess the manifestation of the perfect righteousness of an absolutely sinless man. We are not asking now whether this is really so; we only say such is our belief, the deep conviction of our souls. But if this be so, then you would expect before you opened a page of the Gospels—before you read a line of that wondrous life—that according to the analogy of all other holy and righteous lives we know of, this life should not demonstrate itself, should not make it an impossibility for the sceptical intellect to find fault with it; that it should only reveal itself to those whose lives were in some measure like it,—that its wisdom should justify itself, but only to the children of wisdom. Judging from experience, judging

from analogy, judging from the way in which good men are treated by bad men and the higher nature is regarded by the lower, you would not expect that the perfect life should be thoroughly understood by every nature that it comes in contact with. You would expect to hear just what the story tells you—how He was despised and rejected of men; how those who saw Him besought Him that He would depart out of their coasts. If the revelation of a person and a nature—a perfect person and a perfect nature—is to follow the analogy of all like revelations that we know of, of all revelations of a higher to a lower nature, then we must expect that this law will govern it that governs all those others; that there shall be in it, too, room for doubt and trial of faith; and that to those, and those only, who conquer the doubt and exercise the faith, will the promise be realised in its very highest form, “Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.”

It was in the might of this faith,—not faith in a series of propositions merely, not faith in a collection of dogmas only, although they *did* believe the propositions and *did* hold the dogmas,—it was in the might of faith in this person, in the strength of their trust in this nature,—that the disciples of this Perfect One went out to conquer the world. What was it that gathered believing multitudes round the disciples of Christ? What was it that emptied the temples of heathendom over so large a portion of the Roman Empire, within so short a time of His death? Was it the higher morality—was it the exquisite teaching of Jesus—that did this? Did it ever occur to you to read carefully the Acts and the letters of His Apostles, and to see how very few of the words of Christ appear there? When the Apostles gathered the multitudes about them in the synagogue, or market-place, or forum, did they say,

“Come and listen to the beautiful morality of Jesus the Prophet! Harken to the wonderful teachings of the Sermon on the Mount”? They did not do this. You will not find a quotation from the Sermon on the Mount, or a repetition of any of the teachings of our Saviour, in the whole of the Acts of the Apostles, and hardly one in the Epistles. What did the first preachers of Christianity do? They gathered the multitude about them, not by preaching the *words* of Christ, but by preaching *Christ*. They did not say, “Come and listen to this sermon,” but they said, “Come and believe this man.” It was the personality, the life and death, the resurrection and ascension of Christ which proved so attractive. It was a person, a nature, a man that they asked men to believe in, and not merely in the teaching of a man. And the result is the singular and remarkable fact that Jesus Christ is the only teacher who is greater than His teaching. All other teachers have fallen into comparative insignificance compared to their teaching. We think a great deal, for instance, of the teaching of Euclid, but who cares about the life of Euclid? The words of all other men have become greater than the men themselves, but Christ is to this day greater than His words. Men are fond of comparing Christ to Socrates; of saying that His teaching is like Socrates’ teaching; that His death is like Socrates’ death. Let us take it to be so. Did any one ever hear of a devoted disciple of Socrates saying, “I am dead with Socrates; I live in Socrates; the life that I live I live by faith in Socrates; Socrates is in me and I in Socrates”? Was ever such a word heard of any teacher save One? How comes it then that within a few months after the death of this Teacher, His disciples were saying this and nothing but this; that men were not quoting His words, but were believing in His life and death? It was

because the faith of the human soul had gone out to the person and nature and work of Christ; the hope of humanity had triumphed in the discovery of the Perfect Man, just as the conscience of humanity had rejoiced in the discovery of the Perfect Saviour.

And now we have reached the last point to which I have desired to bring you in these sermons. We have reached the point at which, leaving speculations as to what might be, or ought to be, we arrive at the historical facts which we assert have been. Others will take up the argument here, and go on to show you from history or prophecy, or miracle, such evidences as the facts of the Christian story may furnish. My task ends with the attempt to remove those stumbling-blocks which might prevent your coming to hear them. It will be their task to lead you onwards from the door of the temple to its very innermost shrine; it has been mine to lead you up these three steps, as it were, just to the very threshold. In the way of those whom we would bring within the temple of Christianity we have ever found that those three things of which we have been speaking in these sermons have been difficulties—honestly and really felt—difficulties that have kept many from entering in. The first of these has been the belief that Christianity is opposed to free-thought: and I have endeavoured to show you that in the true sense and meaning of this word “free-thought,” Christianity does not deny, but asserts it; or that where it does deny it, it denies it no more than law and society and nature deny it. The second difficulty we have had to deal with has been this: that men have demanded that all the objections that the sceptical intellect can raise shall be solved before they become Christians; and I have endeavoured to show you that though scepticism be fatal to Christianity, it is equally fatal to morality—and to all the higher forms of human

life ; and therefore that in requiring the submission of the sceptical understanding to the soul, Christianity is only doing what morality in all ages has done. And to-night what have we been doing ? We have been answering the objection that is so often made that Christianity is obliged to appeal to faith, because it cannot furnish demonstration. Our answer is that all the demonstration that is possible in the nature of the case,—all the demonstration that is possible for history,—all the demonstration that is necessary for the supernatural,—Christianity does bring ; but that, and beyond this, it does make an appeal to man's faith, and that, in so doing, not only does it act according to the analogy of human life and human morals, but by its very appeal to faith, it justifies its claim to be a true religion, a true gift from God to man.

And now the time has come for closing this series of discourses, in which I have endeavoured to set before you what I believe in my inmost soul to be the truth, and the truth only, so far as I have learnt it. And before we part, I wish to ask those of you who believe not, just this one question :—Why—in all honesty and candour—do you suppose that I am here ? Why do you suppose that the chief ministers of this place have asked me and others to come here ? There may be those who will tell you that we come here because we are priests and bigots, and wish to keep you in ignorance, for that we derive some great profit from keeping you in ignorance. Do you really believe, then, that we come with the design of deceiving and misleading you ? Will you not give me credit for this at least, that to the best of my ability, in all honesty and with all earnestness, and as before God, in whom I believe, I have endeavoured to put before you reasons which seem to me sufficient reasons for my belief,—reasons on which I stake the eternal future of my life,—and which I submit

to you why you also should believe for your souls' sake? Hear us, then, for this reason, if for no other,—that we do desire your souls for our Lord and Master. It is in His name, and for your sake, that we have come among you. It is because we believe that He of whom we have spoken is the very Son of God come down from Heaven, who has given us the mission to make His name known to men,—it is for this reason that we are here to speak to you; to you who believe,—that we may, with God's help, deepen your faith; to those who believe not,—that, if it may be so by God's great mercy, we may shake your unbelief. We come to you with a word that we believe to be a word from God,—a word that exhorts you to belief and faith—a word that exhorts you to follow the higher and not the lower part of your nature;—we have this word for you: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and ye shall be saved!” If there are those here who do not believe the first part of that message, there are none here who do not at least wish to believe, in some sort, the second part of it. Men do need to be saved,—saved, if not in the next, in this world,—delivered, if it might be, from some of the sin and sorrow that weigh so heavily upon every human heart and every human life. Is there no need of faith, or if no need of faith, is there no desire for the objects of faith among men? Have we no need of faith at this moment? The world is growing old and sick at heart. All the remedies that have been devised from time to time for the evils of society and the sorrows of humanity have been tried to very exhaustion, and tried in vain. Idol after idol that men have set up and sacrificed to has been rocked from its base and shivered into fragments. The gods that men have worshipped have been taken away again and again. And again and again has the cry of despair risen, “What have we left?” Faith!—faith in the future of humanity!

What answer does the past give to this? In all the past ages is there one proof that in this world, constituted as it is, there shall ever be perfection of our nature? Faith in what? Faith in science! Did science ever comfort a sorrow? Did science ever heal a broken heart? Faith in civilization? Did civilization ever yet remedy the evils that are burrowing and festering into the very heart of society? Civilization! It means in the present day the gathering of men together more and more in great masses. It means the luxurious, artistic, voluptuous life of great towns. It means the wan, weary, toilsome, haggard life of those who in those same great towns must minister to that life of ease and wealth. It means the rich growing very rich. It means the poor growing very poor. Civilization has its dark shadow of degradation ever following on its track—the darker by contrast with its light. Civilization and science! Have they arrested war? Have they softened the heart of humanity? Civilization and art and science!—why, they are busy making mitrail-leuses, and inventing the newest and most sweepingly destructive methods of murder! Where will you find, in any one of those things that men worship, a substitute for God? Where will you find in these leaves of the tree of knowledge “the healing of the nations”? Yes! we should indeed be mocking you if we spoke, as some speak, of a coming millennium of science and art—we should indeed be mocking you if we spoke of the possibility of the natural condition of man being remedied without supernatural help. We believe in the perfection of humanity, but not in this life. We believe in a millennium yet to come—not in this world, but in that which is yet to be revealed. We believe in an eternal peace, but it is to be at the coming of the Prince of Peace. It is in this faith and this alone that we gain courage to look upon the sins

and sorrows—the deadly sins, the weary sorrows—that afflict humanity. It is in the strength of this faith that we bear each one of us our own griefs and carry our own sorrows. It is in the strength of this faith that we can look for the last time into unclosed graves, and though with lips that are white and quivering with agony, can raise the song of Christian triumph over death and despair, and looking onward into the distant future, which that hour of sorrow seems to bring so very near, we can thank God again and again for the message that He has given us, and that we give you here in His name to-night:—“Blessed”—thrice blessed!—“are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.”

THE DEMONSTRATION OF THE SPIRIT.

THE DEMONSTRATION OF THE SPIRIT.

PREACHED IN NORWICH CATHEDRAL, DECEMBER 12TH, 1871.

“And His name, through faith in His name, hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by Him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.”—Acts iii. 16.

IN these words Christianity, as we Christians understand it, finds its perfect type and representation. Suffering humanity healed by a Divine power, that power residing in the person of Jesus Christ, and faith in that personal Christ the condition of that healing; this is *distinctively* Christianity. This is its gospel—the “good news” that it has for mankind. It is in this that Christianity differs from all other religions. Christianity shares with many other religions a belief in a personal God, in a future life, in rewards and punishments after death, in atonement and forgiveness by sacrifice. These are not *distinctively* Christian ideas, though they *are* Christian ideas. But Christianity stands alone, distinguished from all other religions, in this—that it asserts that a personal and living God saves men through faith in a living and personal Christ.

Now, if you remember the sermons that I lately preached here, you will remember that I endeavoured to show you—and I think I did show you—that salvation by faith is no new doctrine or idea, is not peculiar to Christianity; that we must every one of us be saved from very great evils by faith; that faith lies at the root

of all morality, for that, if we are to be moral at all, it can only be by an act of faith in our own conscience and spiritual nature; so that, whether men are or are not to be saved from a hell hereafter by faith, it is quite certain they can be saved by faith alone from a hell here, the hell that would come upon earth if morality ever ceased to exist. And we saw further how this faith in our own moral being leads us on to put like faith in others than ourselves. For when we say, that we have faith in our moral nature, we do not surely mean in our nature as differing from that of other men; on the contrary, it is only so far as we believe this to be true for all men that we feel it must be true for us. This faith, then, in the morality of human nature is capable of being increased by every instance of moral humanity that we encounter. Every man whom I see acting out a faith in his own better self, ruling himself by the higher law he finds within him, confirms my belief in that law; and so he becomes to me, not merely a teacher, or an example, but a helper and deliverer. He helps to save me from my lower and baser self. On the other hand I may refuse such help, I may turn away from the light of such a life, lest my deeds be reproved by it; but just in the degree in which I do this do I lose my faith in human nature; I have adopted a lower standard for humanity than that which really exists, and the lower standard that I thus adopt I conform to. My moral growth is checked; my moral decay and death has begun. And thus every such purer and nobler spirit that we encounter becomes our probation. Faith in him will help and distrust of him will hurt our spiritual life. We must be the better or the worse for having known him, and which we shall be depends upon our own free choice. And thus whenever there appears in history some nature pre-eminently good

and beautiful—some great soul, some true prophet of righteousness—those who own and accept him as such are saved by him in a very real sense ; while on the other hand those who reject him suffer grievous loss. They are punished by that darkening of the soul that ever follows on the choice of evil rather than good. Not in Judea only, but everywhere, in all ages, the people that refuses to hear its true prophets perishes. Salvation by faith in other persons than ourselves—distrust in ourselves and trust in others—is thus, you see, actually necessary to salvation, even though the Christian religion had never been heard of.

And in this sense I am sure that many who are not Christians would admit that Jesus Christ has in time past saved those who believed in Him. That is to say—they would admit that He has been very helpful to men's spiritual life ; so helpful that He might even with truth be called *a* saviour of men. But here is where they and we differ. We say that Christ is to us much more than this. We say that He is not only *a* saviour, one of the many saviours of men, but that He is *the* Saviour ; that He has a salvation to work for us that none other did or can work. We say that He saves and helps us not only by His teaching and example naturally, but by His death and by His life supernaturally : that He has that to give us since His death and ascension to Heaven that no one else has to give ; and that faith in His name has saved, is saving, will save, men as nothing else can.

Here then lies the real difference between us and our opponents. They, for the most part, tell us that though it is true that Jesus of Nazareth was very useful to humanity at a certain stage of its development, yet that humanity needs Him no longer. We now know all that He had to tell men. His pure morality, His sublime

ethics, are ours now as truly as they were once His. We see all that He saw, and just as clearly; nay, some say, more clearly than He ever did. We may even correct His errors and improve upon His teaching. We must pass Him by now, respectfully and gratefully if you will, but still we must pass Him by, if we would move on with the more advanced and nobler spirits of the age, for whom faith in any teacher or in any thing, save the intuitions of their own great souls, has become impossible. The progress of humanity, too long arrested around Gethsemane and Calvary, is to receive a fresh impulse when we have shaken off our old superstitious belief in the person of Jesus. Christendom must learn to do without its Christ; but they are good enough to assure us that this need cause us no distress, for already they can see how "up the heaven is climbing the sun of a new day!"

We say, on the contrary, that Jesus Christ is still essential to the true spiritual life of men—that we cannot do without Him; cannot afford to pass Him by. We say, that the true centre of humanity, the root of all true human progress, is just that very Christ, whom they exhort us to forget and leave behind in our onward march to their new promised land. Christ crucified, we maintain, is still to us and to all who believe in Him, not only wisdom, but power—a supernatural power—saving men as nothing else can save.

The question then between Christianity and all other religions is just this—What relations are there between Jesus Christ and the human soul? Are these relations merely natural, such as might exist between our spirits and any of the greater, nobler spirits of the past; or are they supernatural, and such as can exist only between the Christ of Christianity and our souls? This is the question on which I have to speak to you to-night.

Now, there are two ways in which we may attempt to find an answer to this question. One is what is commonly called the historical mode of investigation. We may set about it in this way. We may say—"Eighteen hundred years ago there lived one who was known as Jesus of Nazareth; He wrought certain miraculous works; He fulfilled certain miraculous prophecies; and these works and these fulfilled prophecies are evidence that He came from God, and that He was divinely inspired infallibly to tell us what is truth. Hence we have only to ask Him what He is to us, and whatever He says concerning Himself we are bound to believe." This is the historical proof of Christianity, and it is a most important and essential part of the evidences of Christianity. Christianity is an historical religion, and it must have historical proof. Christianity is a supernatural religion, and it must have supernatural evidences. But it is often objected that this is a difficult line of proof for plain, ordinary men; that before they can accept it they must decide a number of nice and difficult questions of history, of criticism, of metaphysics, and even of physical science; and we are triumphantly asked—Can it be possible that a religion which claims to be a gospel for the poor, needs all these laborious and intricate evidences to prove it? Surely a revelation from God, intended for the masses of mankind, should have had simpler and plainer credentials than these. Now to this objection we might make more than one reply. We might say that these critical and metaphysical difficulties are not those that very much trouble plain and poor men. They are mostly difficulties that are raised, and have to be answered, by learned men. Or we might say that we have no right beforehand to dictate to God that His way of salvation shall be an easy one. We have no more right to say that we should have

an easy way to Heaven than that we should, every one of us, have an easy life on earth. But our answer to-night is, that this is not the only line of proof for Christianity. It is a most valuable and necessary line, but it is not the only one. There is another simpler evidence, one level to the capacity of all men, and it is of this I am going to speak. Instead of going back eighteen hundred years ago to ascertain certain alleged facts in history, suppose we begin with ascertaining certain facts in our own experience and our own life. Let us begin in the year 1871 and go back to the year 1, and not begin in the year 1 and come down to the year 1871. Are there no facts that you and I know of in our own personal experience, with which we may begin, and reason back from to those other remoter historical evidences of Christianity. We think there are, and they are these: Our Lord Jesus Christ says that He came into this world to be the Saviour of sinners; that He came to seek and to save the lost. When He says this, He asserts two things:—First, that there is such a fact as sin; and, secondly, that there is such a fact as salvation from sin. Is it true, then, that there are such facts in this world as sin and salvation from sin? And is it further true that this salvation from sin is attained by those who believe in Jesus Christ, in a degree in which it is not attained by others? Now, here are questions of fact within our own knowledge, that we can all test for ourselves.

Is there such a thing in the world now as sin? I suppose that all are agreed that at least there is such a thing in the world as moral imperfection. There is no one who has any sense of duty whatever, who does not know how often he falls short of his own standard of right—however low that standard may be. And he knows, too, that this failure to do right is accompanied by a sense of

pain and distress peculiar to itself. Every one in this congregation who has ever tried to live righteously—and he who has never so tried has no right to talk about religion—but every one who has so tried, knows two things : one is that he often fails in his endeavour, another is that, when he does so, he feels a sense of self-reproach. This is not the case with any other imperfections ; they may cause us pain, but not pain of this kind. No man believes himself mentally or bodily perfect, and yet no man dreams of blaming himself because he is not so. We should laugh at the man who told us that he bitterly reproached himself because he could not write like Shakespeare ; or suffered agonies of remorse because he could not paint like Raffaele. But we do not laugh at—we sympathise with—the man who tells us that he grieves and reproaches himself because he cannot live like Paul or Christ. We feel that such a man is suffering from that strange pain, which all men feel who strive and yet fail to live righteously. We feel that he is testifying to that mysterious fact in our nature, that we are at once aware that we cannot realize our own ideal of righteousness, and yet unhappy because of that inability.

To this moral weakness men give different names according to the theory they have formed as to its nature or origin. They may differ widely, too, as to the proper remedy for it, or as to whether there be any remedy for it at all. But all agree that it exists, and all admit that deliverance from it would be the salvation of mankind.

So far then all are agreed. There is a defect in our nature which most men call sin, and from which if we are ever to be saved, it must be by acquiring in some way or other the power to be righteous. And of this salvation he must speak, who would commend himself to the consciences of men. Of course his utterance may be, that on

this subject the human conscience has hitherto been altogether mistaken. He may have to announce to us the discovery that this imperfection which distresses us is really inevitable, and therefore blameless; and that all those pangs and fears by which the human soul has, in all ages past, been afflicted on account of it, were all one long hypochondria; from which, strange to stay, the best and noblest amongst men have been the greatest sufferers, tormenting themselves with a vain endeavour after an ideal perfection, terrifying themselves with imaginary guilt and imaginary penalties for their failure to attain it. Or he may cheer us with the assurance that this salvation will be ultimately attained in the progress of the race of man through remotely distant ages; and that the contemplation of this remote millennium for others, in which we can have no share, should infinitely console and strengthen us through all the trials and sorrows of our present lives. Or he may inform us that this salvation will be brought about by a clearer knowledge of the great physiological and social and economic laws of the world—that is to say, that the multitudes for whom Christian evidences are too hard a study shall be delivered from sin by the study of physiology, and social science, and political economy. Or he may tell you that you may get rid of the sin that is in your hearts by cultivating your intellects—that when a man is tempted to steal, for instance, he will be kept from stealing when he has learnt that s-t-e-a-l spells steal; or that when a man is tempted to shed the life-blood of his fellow-man, it will be a great help to him against the temptation, if he understand the anatomy of the body which he is tempted to slay. In this or in any other way our new teachers may deal with these ideas of sin and salvation; but deal with them in some way or other they must. Something

they must have to say to us about that fact in our nature, which we call sin, something about the desire of our nature for what we call salvation ; or they have no concern with us nor we with them.

And now we proceed to cite another known fact. There exists in this world a great society called the Church of Christ, the very object of which is to save men from sin. It professes to exist for this and for nothing else—to give men, through Christ, a new life by which they should be saved from sin. Does it do this? If it does, mark what follows. If you find that in this Church of Christ you are saved from sin by believing in Christ, then you have a right to turn back to the life of Him, faith in whom you believe has saved you from sin, and to say, “I find in my life to-day certain facts, and I find in the life of One who lived eighteen hundred years ago a promise that, if I believed in Him, those facts should reveal themselves in my life. Now then how am I to account for the fact that the facts of to-day are those so distinctly foretold and promised in that life of eighteen hundred years ago? What strange mystery is it that joins so marvellously my life with His life—the facts in my life with the promise of those facts in His? What is it that makes Him live in me eighteen hundred years and more after His death?” When you have asked yourself this question, then you are prepared to study those historical evidences, those proofs from miracles and prophecy which give you the answer—ay, the only sufficient answer, to that question. So you see, those of you who are ordinary and simple men, you have “not to wade through great masses of historical evidence” to find your Saviour; you see you can find Him present here. You are not called on to begin by imagining yourself not a Christian, and then arguing yourself into Christianity ; but you are entitled

to say, "I am a Christian; I have very good and satisfactory reasons for being a Christian, and before you ask me to give up my Christianity, give me some reason why I should do so; disprove the reasons I allege for what I am and what I feel; show me that all this is a delusion and a mistake: then I am ready to give up my Christian ideas at your bidding. But meanwhile I am not much disposed to rise up and go out of my Father's home, where I have been sheltered and fed, at the bidding of any prodigal who has gone into a far country, and who cries to me to come and share his banquet, which may prove after all to be one of husks."

But is there such a fact to be seen within the Christian Church as salvation from sin? I trust that there are those in this congregation, who know this from their own experience. I trust there are those who can say, "I know that I have been a sinner—a helpless captive to vice and sin—and I can remember when I went to Jesus Christ, and upon my knees asked Him to save me from my sin, and He did save me. I can remember when I rose from my knees a new man. I can remember when I went out into the world again in all the strength and vigour of a new life that I never had before."

The man who knows this has a fact in his own experience that no one can take from him; and that man is not likely to give up his faith at the sudden call of an unbeliever; for you may be sure that no man will ever lightly change his religion whose religion has ever changed him. But, of course, this change in a man's own soul, though a great help to his faith, is no demonstration to those who have never experienced it.

Then the next question is—Is there such a thing outside of ourselves, visible to us and to all men, as salvation from sin? Is there not? Is there anyone who knows

anything of the working of Christ's Church now, or in the past, who will dare to say that it has no instance to show of the salvation of men from their sins? There is not one in this town of Norwich who does not know well that from time to time there is that to be seen within the limits of the Christian Church, which is not to be seen outside it : sinners, men of vice, men of crime, outcasts, the very refuse of society,—whom your philosophers shake their heads over, and reckon among the anomalies of humanity, and whom your moralists grieve over but cannot help—reclaimed from their sins, delivered from their vices, made new men. They are often made so suddenly, and yet they are made so completely. They are to be seen repentant with very tears of blood over sins, that but an hour before they gloried in. They are to be seen “ clothed and in their right mind, sitting at the feet of Jesus.” I say that these are facts just as certain as it is a fact that I am now here standing to preach to you. There is not a city missionary, there is not a Scripture reader, there is not a clergyman—ay, there is not an honest and truthful man who knows anything of the working of Christianity, who cannot testify, if he will, to the existence of this class of facts within the limits of the Christian Church.

And then, we know further that this Christian life is to be found essentially the same under the most diverse circumstances of time, and country, and race. High and low, rich and poor, learned and ignorant, civilised and savage, all are found equally capable of manifesting it in its highest forms. The most inferior and despised races of mankind can show themselves, in this respect at least, the equals of the savants, who are learnedly demonstrating them to be but slightly improved apes. Nay, what is perhaps stranger still, it is to be found alike amongst all

those varieties of Christian sects who, widely as they differ on other points of belief, agree in believing in Christ. However much these may dispute on other matters, they are yet found to be one in their common experience of the inner Christian life. There are those in every Christian community who can and do unite in saying this—"We know that we are saved from the power of sin by faith in Jesus Christ."

Now if these facts of the Christian life exist among us, we have the right to ask, How came they to exist? We Christians have our own way of accounting for them; but those who utterly reject our theory of their origin may fairly be asked to do one of two things—to imitate them, or to account for them. If those who are not Christians can do all that Christianity does in the way of saving men from sin, then they will have shown that we are wrong in saying that this power to save, whatever be its origin, is peculiar to Christianity.

Or, if without doing this much they can account for the power of Christianity on purely natural grounds, they will have shown that, even granting this power to be exclusively Christian, we are wrong in asserting it to be supernatural.

We say then to all those who, rejecting Christianity, still profess to have some religious belief, If you would try this question out with us, set your faith at work alongside of ours—at that work, which we all agree religion has to do—the saving of men from sin—and see which does it best. Nothing is easier than to sit in your studies with the model of our religion before you, comparing it with your improvements of it, and telling us that ours is antiquated and worn out, and yours the only true one. Our answer is—Rise up and try. Religions, like constitutions, may be drawn up on paper in the study by

the score ; they must be tested in the street. Try then in this way your new and improved religion. The trial at least is easy. The next street that you turn into will very likely furnish us with a sufficient test. Here comes one who needs some help to save her from the ruin that seems to have marked her for its prey. Shame and misery, want and the fear of want, and late remorse and grim despair, have done their work on her, and left their marks upon a face, whence sin has swept with its effacing fingers every trace of the beauty of womanhood and the modest comeliness of innocence. Dark thoughts are busy at her heart, mingling the memories of the lost past and the agony of the present and the dread of the future, all in one wild, weary wish for the rest and refuge of the grave. What shall we say to her ? We may not speak to her of Him who suffered the woman that was a sinner to wash His feet with her tears—that is a Christian myth ; nor tell her that His blood cleanseth 'from all sin—that is a Jewish dogma repugnant to our better moral sense. But you may open your Emerson and read her the exhortation that bids her say—"I love the Right. Truth is beautiful within and without for evermore. Virtue, I am thine : save me, use me : thee will I serve day and night, in great and small, that I may be—not virtuous, but Virtue !" And you may cheer her sad heart by assuring her that when she "attains to say this," then will "the end of her creation be answered, and God will be well pleased !" And doubtless she will thank you for this, and will tell you that is a great help to aid her to struggle against sin, shame, and misery, and the madness of her despair. Try it. We challenge you teachers of the new religion to try your faith. We have tried ours. There have been those who have gone into the streets of our great cities and said to such a one—"You are an outcast, you are lost, and

that is just the very reason the Son of God came from Heaven to save you. Christ our Saviour has come to seek and to save the lost." And somehow this gospel does save these outcasts. Will you try yours instead, and tell us what it has done? And when you have saved one soul by your way, then it will be time for us to begin to think of changing ours.

Or will you try the efficacy of your new remedy for sin upon even a worse and more hopeless case? Will you try it upon him who has made that poor lost one what she is—upon the accomplished, polished gentleman, let us suppose, whom education and civilisation have somehow failed to cure of selfish and cruel lusts? Will you address him in another exhortation from the same gospel, and say—Oh, sinful and selfish man, do you not know "that the law of gravitation is identical with purity of heart"? Listen to me while I tell you "that duty is one thing with science, with beauty, and with joy." Try it! and come and tell us what the result has been. And we will tell you meanwhile of those like him, who have been brought to kneel in bitter penitence before a Cross, that tells of unselfish, of self-sacrificing love!

Or perhaps you might prefer to deal with the sins and sorrows of the world in the spirit of another of these new gospels. Listen to it. "Man must be taught, first, all those physical laws upon which God has made health to depend; secondly, all those moral laws on which He has made happiness to depend; thirdly, all those intellectual laws upon which He has made knowledge to depend; fourthly, all those social and political laws upon which He has made national prosperity and advancement to depend; and lastly, all those economic laws on which He has made wealth to depend. A true comprehension of all these and of their nature"—a very easy thing of course, for a

plain, poor man to learn—"will ultimately rescue mankind from all their vices, and from nearly all their suffering, save casualties and sorrows." And you will wait for the distant accomplishment of this new gospel; and in the meanwhile our gospel will continue to save not a few of those who will have died before yours comes into operation.

Yes, we do believe that there is a salvation from sin within the limits of this despised superstition of Christianity that is not to be found outside of it. But if those who deny the supernatural origin of Christianity cannot imitate the facts of the Christian life, can they account for them? They try at least to do so. What most of them say is to this effect. Granting the existence of these facts, they can be easily shown to have had a perfectly natural origin. Some eighteen centuries ago, a Jewish peasant preached certain religious ideas of great power and beauty, though not without some mixture of error and superstition, and enforced these by a very pure and noble life; which was prematurely terminated by a cruel death at the hands of his countrymen. The power of his ideas and of his example together effected that great religious movement which bears his name, and still produces that spiritual life which manifests itself wherever his name is believed in.

Now to this theory there are some weighty objections. In the first place, it is directly opposed to the universal testimony of the Christian Church. The traditional belief of any race or community, as to its own origin, is certainly entitled to some respect, especially when that belief is uniform and consistent. Now the uniform and consistent testimony of all true Christians in every age is that the cause of what they call their new life has not been their study of the moral teaching or the example of Jesus; but

that it has been their believing in Him as their Saviour and Redeemer. They date the power of this life in them—not from the time when they first admired Jesus of Nazareth, but from the time when they first began in earnest to pray to Jesus Christ the Son of God.

It is not a philosophical mode of treating this question to ignore this universal tradition of Christendom, or to pronounce it, off-hand, to be a strange mistake. The Christian consciousness of eighteen centuries is not to be so lightly disposed of. The singular language which Christians use respecting the nature and origin of their Christian life is as remarkable and as new a fact as that life itself; and both together seem at least to point as their cause to some fact as new and as peculiar in the life of its Founder;—both force upon us the question, “What think ye of Christ?”

In the next place this theory is contradicted by the known facts in the history of the planting of Christianity. The Apostles, as I have before pointed out to you, did not go about repeating the words of Christ; or telling at any length the details of His life; they preach invariably—not the words or the life of Christ; but His death and His resurrection. They do not say to their hearers, Come, hear us repeat to you the discourses of Jesus the great Prophet of Nazareth. Listen to this noble passage from His Sermon on the Mount, or this exquisite parable of the Prodigal Son, or observe this touching instance of His goodness; but they say, Listen to us, as we tell you how “Jesus of Nazareth, approved of God by signs and wonders, crucified by wicked hands, was raised from the dead and exalted to Heaven to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins.” And thousands must have been converted by these teachings, and exhibited the Christian life in all its beauty, who could

have known little, if anything, of the words of Jesus. It was not the Sermon on the Mount that pricked the hearts of the three thousand on the day of Pentecost, and made them cry out, "What shall we do?" It was not the parable of the Good Samaritan that turned the licentious idolaters of Rome and Corinth and Ephesus into Christian Saints. It was, so far as we can see, just those dogmas concerning the efficacy of Christ's death and resurrection, which we are told are hindering all true life and progress now. Surely on this theory of a world regenerated by the words and life of Jesus, in spite of certain noxious superstitions about His person, it is a very strange fact that this regeneration should have been effected, in the first instance at least, without the help of His words or His example, and by means apparently of those very superstitions and nothing else.

But there is another difficulty in the way of this theory. We have to ask—If the teaching of Jesus Christ, merely in a natural way, wrought this life, what were those teachings, what were those new and sublime ideas of His that brought this new life into the world? It is clear they cannot merely have been His moral precepts, because we may take it for certain that no precepts, no law of any kind, ever yet regenerated a human soul. Law tells us what we ought to be, but law never yet gave man the power of being what he knows he ought to be. The world before Christ came had more moral laws than it could obey. The great law—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy strength, and thy neighbour as thyself"—was well known before He came; what men needed was power to obey it. They needed some new reason to move them to love God and their fellow-men. Doctrine of some kind or other must always accompany precept to give it motive power

amongst men. Whoever would deeply stir the tides of the human heart must not merely announce a law, he must preach an idea. We ask then, again, what were these religious ideas of Jesus that so deeply stirred the heart of humanity? Clearly they could not have been any of those ideas, which our "modern reason" and "higher consciousness" have discovered to be not only false but pernicious. It could only have been the pure truth in Christ's teachings, and not any of His errors, that gave light and life to men. Hence it is clear that we must leave out of our Lord's teaching all that his critics regard as untrue—all assertions of His divinity; all teaching, for instance, of sacrifice and atonement; of a hell, of a personal evil spirit, or of the second coming of Christ to judge the world. Well, if we leave this all out, what remains of the teaching of Jesus? We are told that it was His sublime Deism—His teaching of a simpler and more attractive religion. Here is the account of His success by M. Renan, the author of the "Life of Christ": "It was the new idea of a worship founded on purity of heart and human fraternity. It was the charm of a religion freed from all external forms, that made the attraction of Christianity for all nobler souls." You observe, "for all nobler souls." There is nothing said about the degraded and outcast; nothing about the publican and the harlot. This is a gospel only for nobler souls! Let us take it as it stands—this "new idea of worship founded upon purity of heart," and "the charm of a religion freed from all external forms." Now, I ask what was it, as a matter of fact, that the Apostles taught? Most certainly it was not a religion freed from external form, nor yet a religion without dogma. They taught dogma in its most intense and dogmatic form. They preached Atonement, Sacrifice, Regeneration, Faith, Sanctification. They insisted on

dogmatic facts, such as the Incarnation, the Resurrection, the Ascension, the Coming of the Holy Ghost. They baptized their converts into one most mysterious dogma, and commanded them to show forth another, only less mysterious, in the other great rite of their religion. And yet we are told that the great secret of the success of Christianity was its freedom from form and dogma! That is to say, we are asked to believe that Jesus Christ by preaching a religion free from form and dogma, induced a number of Jews, brought up in the belief of dogmas and observance of forms, to forsake their religion and adopt His. And then, that no sooner have they adopted this undogmatic and informal religion than they go out and convert the world by preaching dogmas and by imposing forms! They forsake Moses, for instance, because he taught them that God required to be propitiated by bloodshedding, and straightway they preach the blood of Christ as the propitiation for sin. They reject the idea of expiation by animal sacrifices, and they forthwith proclaim the seemingly far grosser and more shocking idea of expiation by human sacrifice. They cease to be Jews, because Christ has convinced them that repentance towards God is all that sinners need to obtain His favour; and they persuade others to become Christians, because repentance is not sufficient without "faith in Christ."

Did ever anyone hear of a theory so absurd and self-contradicting as this? A religious reformer begins his reformation by preaching a new idea so grand and striking that it rapidly gains him numerous converts, and these immediately set about proclaiming—not that idea to which they were converted, but the very ideas they were converted from! Luther brought about the Reformation by teaching the supremacy of the Scriptures, and the sufficiency of private judgment. Would you believe, if

you were asked to believe it, that Luther having done this, and this being the great secret of his success, it was, nevertheless, a fact that every one of Luther's followers preached the insufficiency of the Scriptures and the sin and folly of private judgment; and that by doing this they converted the world largely to Protestantism, and that this fully accounts for the success of Protestantism? And yet is this one whit more absurd than the idea of Jesus Christ successfully assailing Judaism by preaching pure and simple Deism, and His converts immediately completing His work by preaching the central error both of Judaism and Paganism?

But there is yet another difficulty in the way of the theory, that it was the novelty and the simplicity of Christ's pure Deism, to which Christianity owes its success. And it is this—that such teaching was *not* new. So at least say the very men who, when it suits their purpose, insist upon its striking and novel character. For when we Christians point to the beauty and the grandeur of Christ's religious and moral ideas as proving Him more than man, these very men turn round and tell us we are quite mistaken. There is nothing after all so new or so striking in the religious teaching of Jesus. The ideas of the unity of God, of His Fatherhood, of the efficacy of repentance, of the insufficiency of sacrifices, of the worthlessness of ceremonies and forms without purity of heart—all these had been proclaimed, we are reminded, long before by the Jewish Prophets. They had told the Jews that “the Lord their God was one God,” that “His tender mercies were over all His works;” that He “pitied them even as a father pitieth his children;” that He needeth not “to eat the flesh of bulls and drink the blood of goats;” that to obey Him was “better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams;” that if “the wicked man

forsook his way and returned unto Him, He would have mercy upon him and abundantly pardon." And not the Prophets only, but the later Jewish writers, Simeon the Just, and Jesus son of Sirach, and Philo, and many another writer have said things quite as striking, and nearly identical indeed with those that Jesus Christ has said. Nay, even the heathen poets and sages are many of them His equals. The Orphic Hymns and the Vedas, for instance, contain thoughts of God quite as sublime as anything He ever said.

Be it so. Here then arises our difficulty. How comes it to pass that not one of these elder Prophets, not one of these sublimer sages, ever effected by their ideas what He effected by His? What was there in the teaching of Jesus that was wanting, it seems, in the teaching of Simeon the Just, and Jesus the son of Sirach, and Philo and the rest of them? What is the secret of the power, which this new Teacher of old truths and trite sayings undoubtedly exercised over the minds of men? M. Renan, in dire distress for an answer to this question, assures us that it was partly due at least to the "charm of his exquisite manner!" Only think of this! the exquisite charm of Christ's manners converted the world; converted, that is, the thousands who had never seen His face nor heard a word from His lips! The graces of his literary style won the Greek and the Roman to worship a crucified Jew, and to be willing themselves to be crucified rather than forswear their faith in Him! But the example of Christ, we are told, the beauty of His life—this must alone have sufficed to give currency to His ideas, and these ideas once spread abroad worked naturally the great moral results of Christianity. But apart from the question whether the life of Christ, considered as that of mere man, is an example in all respects to be followed—

whether He did not say and do many things that none of His followers ever dared or ought to say or do ; and apart, too, from the question whether the holiness of any teacher really does help much the general acceptance of His teaching—whether we may not and do not very often reject the teaching of those whom we acknowledge to be excellent men—the simple fact is, that, as we have already seen, large multitudes of converts to Christianity, and those its earliest and best, must necessarily have been ignorant of the details of His life ; must have believed on Him before they knew of these details ; the doctrines of Christianity introducing them to the example of Christ, and not His life introducing them to His doctrines.

And now that I have shown you the utter failure of one of the most recent and most ingenious attempts to account naturally for the facts of the Christian life, let me remind you once more that we do not claim that the failure of this or any other theory of the kind to account for these facts naturally, necessarily demonstrates their origin to be supernatural. We admit that what is unaccountable is not therefore supernatural ; but what we contend is, that this impossibility of satisfactorily accounting for these facts on the theory of their merely natural origin makes our theory of their supernatural origin more probable and reasonable. We claim to have shown you some of the difficulties that lie in the way of rejecting Christianity, and that these may, after all, be as great as, nay, greater than the difficulties in the way of accepting it ; that the improbabilities of unbelief may exceed the improbabilities of belief.

The question which we have put before you to-night is really this, Which of the two theories of the origin of Christianity—the natural or the supernatural—seems most probable, taking into account all the facts of the case ?

Which, for instance, seems most easy of belief—such an account of Christianity as M. Renan's, or this—"There is now to be seen in the world a mighty power of spiritual life, recovering the lost, reclaiming the outcast, regenerating, sanctifying human souls, as no other known influence does, or ever did. It is to be found in its highest development only within the limits of the Christian Church. This life was announced as His gift to men, by One who said He came into the world to die and rise again, that he might bestow it on those who believed on Him. He promised, during his lifetime, that, after His resurrection and ascension into Heaven, He would send down the Spirit of God, who should work in the hearts of these believers those same mighty works which we see. And He has done what He promised. His name—through faith in His name—gives soundness to these men in the presence of us all."

Now, we ask, which of these two theories is, after all, the most reasonable ; which best explains and harmonises all these facts of the case ?

If, indeed, the supernatural be, as some men tell us, impossible ; if it be utterly absurd to suppose, either that there is a personal God, or that He can interfere with the order of the world which He has made, then of course we must give up Christianity, and a good deal more besides ; only we should like to have this proved first. But if there be no such violent absurdity or *à priori* impossibility in the idea of the Divine and Supernatural, then why, I ask, are we to be called on so peremptorily to give up our theory of a supernatural origin for Christianity, and accept that other, with all its difficulties and improbabilities ? Is it, after all, so very unreasonable to suppose that wonderful and exceptional facts should have a wonderful and exceptional cause ? And do not these facts and experiences of

the Christian life go far to make credible, and even probable, those other alleged wonderful facts of that other life eighteen hundred years ago? All that record of the supernatural; all that collection of prophecies fulfilled, and miracles wrought; all that story of an incarnation, and a resurrection and ascension, seem to us the sufficient foundation on which was to be raised the superstructure of those other supernatural facts in the world's history ever since. They record the entrance into the world of a power, mighty enough to work the salvation of human souls by regeneration and conversion to God. Surely these were at least an end worthy of such means; an object for which—if for any—supernatural interference might be needed and welcomed.

Beyond this point I do not claim to press this argument with those who differ from us. The demonstration of the Spirit, in its fullest sense, is for those, and for those only, who believe. We who have tried God's remedy for sin know, and have the right to claim to know, more about its efficacy than those who reject it. He who has experienced that change of heart and life which Christ promises to those who believe in Him, has an evidence within him which he cannot give to another, but which none other can take from him. He who sees how his experience links itself with that of all living Christian saints—of all that ever have lived—and with that Divine life from which it first sprung, he has all the demonstration of Christianity that is possible on this side of the grave and of Heaven; but it is a demonstration for himself and not for another.

One word more. I have been speaking of that demonstration of the Spirit that is found in the heart and soul of regenerated and saved man. I have told you that after all this is the last and crowning proof of the divine might

of our religion. But if it be so, then remember that the most dangerous disproof of the Christian religion would be *the want* of those signs and tokens within the Christian Church. Yes, Christianity may survive—ay, and will survive—all assaults upon its historical evidences, all assaults upon its supernatural theory ; but there is one thing, and one thing only, which Christianity could not survive, and that would be the universal ungodliness of Christian men. He who founded it has said that if the salt which is to be the salt of the earth—His own Divine Kingdom in the world—loses its savour, it becomes good for nothing, and men cast it out. For there is nothing so odious and so dangerous as the corpse of a dead religion. Men bury it out of their sight, lest it infect them with a plague. Our Lord has said—and never did He say a truer word of prophecy—that in the hour the salt has lost its spiritual savour it perishes. And if all Christendom should ever become a multitude of merely professing Christians without spiritual life, Christianity would then die, and it would be time to bury it out of the sight of men. But mark this—if it were so, in the very hour of its death, with its last expiring breath, it would be giving evidence of the Divine foresight of Him who founded it ; its very death in those circumstances would be a fulfilment of the prophecy of Him, who said that under those circumstances, and under those alone, would Christianity expire. Listen then you who, professing yourselves Christians, have come to hear of the evidences of Christianity. It is not given to every man to study and to master all the historical evidences of Christianity ; but it is given to every man, if he will, to be himself an evidence of Christianity. Everyone of you may be living epistles of your Lord, known and read of all men ; or you may be living libels on your Lord, known and read of all men.

If every professing Christian in this city of Norwich were this day a spiritual living evidence of Christ, there would be little need for sermons on the evidences of Christianity. Go home, you who profess and call yourselves Christians—go home, and upon your knees bend before the Saviour whose name you bear, and beseech Him through faith in His name to save you from your sins; so that, seeing you, men shall own in you a great work of God. Then shall you be, through all your lives, an evidence of Christ and of Christianity; and souls will be won by your holy lives to the feet of your Divine Master. So his name, through faith in His name, preached faithfully by the lives of His servants in this world, shall still continue to give that soundness in the sight of all men, which shall be the clearest and most enduring evidence that He has come from God.

THE GIFT OF TONGUES AT PENTECOST.

THE GIFT OF TONGUES AT PENTECOST.

PREACHED IN CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL, MAY 28, 1872.

“Are not all these Galileans?”—Acts ii. 7, 8.

THE title which is generally given to the miracle in our text is a most unhappy one. It partly expresses and partly causes a most mistaken idea as to the true meaning of it. The miracle, as you know, is generally entitled the miraculous gift of tongues at Pentecost. By this many persons understand the bestowal on the Apostles of the power of preaching in other languages than their own without any previous study; a power which was supposed especially to fit them for their mission to all the world. And of this gift the miraculous speeches at Pentecost are supposed to be the first manifestation.

And even those who do not go so far as this, even those who know that there is no trace in the history of the early Church of any such power as this—nay, that there is clear proof that it never did possess it—that there never was a time in the world’s history when any such gift was less needed by Christian missionaries than it was then—even these are so far under the influences of this idea that although they do not believe that this gift continued in the Church or to the Apostles, yet believe that on this one occasion it was possessed by them; that on this day of Pentecost for the first preaching of the Gospel to the multitudes from many nations gathered to hear it, the

Apostles were miraculously enabled to preach to them in their own tongues.

And yet there certainly is nothing in the narrative to justify any such notion as this. It is clear from it that the Apostles were not speaking to these multitudes at all, but to each other. It was before the assembling of the multitudes that they "began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance." It was the fame of this strange fact—it was the wonderful report that was noised abroad of this and of the other wonders of that day—that gathered together the multitudes from all the streets of Jerusalem, and when they come they hear evidently no preaching, in our sense of the word, no such sermon or sermons as Peter afterwards delivers. They hear them speaking of the wondrous works of God. They hear these men, filled with the might and the joy of their new gift of the indwelling Spirit, proclaiming in words of praise, in songs of triumph, as He gave them utterance, the wonderful works that He had wrought. It is not the sermon of the new Church that they hear. It is its psalm—its battle-song, before it joins in the battle.

The battle—the great battle of that host of the Lord against sin and error is yet to begin—the first blow is about to be struck—the words of the Apostle shall bring in that one day three thousand captives to the Cross. But at this moment the host is but gathering itself to the battle, with the gleam of fire for its banner, the rushing mighty wind for its trumpet, and the inspired songs of its leaders for its battle march. It stands drawn up in array in the camp of the Lord, and the shout as of a king is heard amongst them, and the multitudes look and wonder and fear. They feel that God is indeed once more revealing Himself to men.

So contemplated, this miraculous speech at Pentecost

regains its true meaning. It is seen to be, like the other two miracles of that day, the tongues of fire and the rushing wind, a miracle purely and strictly symbolical. All these together are seen to be signs—significant, speaking, deeply meaning signs, that herald the coming of the Holy Ghost, and the beginning of His work on earth.

The whole scene stands out and apart from the preceding and succeeding history—like the scene of the adoration of the Magi, or the transfiguration on the Mount, typical, significant, apocalyptic, revealing and foreshadowing the mysteries and the glories of the dispensation it announces. A mystical descent, as it were, of Heaven upon earth, a vision and revelation of the glories of the Heavenly City, unveiling the Bride of the Lamb as she shall yet be in her beauty, and her glorious apparel shown for one moment to the eye of men, and then vanishing away, to be seen of the eye of faith alone.

And, as we so contemplate it, the beauty and the significance of each symbol reveals itself to us—the tongues of fire, that tell of the fiery baptism that is to cleanse the Church of God, enlightening ever as it cleanses: the mighty rushing wind, mysterious in its origin and its direction, the wind of which we cannot tell whence it cometh nor whither it goeth, yet so mighty in its all-pervading power, symbolical of the *force*, the mighty, irresistible, spiritual force that is one day to fill the whole world, as its symbols filled the room that day: and then this inspired speech, this many-voiced utterance of the Spirit, proclaiming in every language the wonderful works of God, symbolic of the gathering together of the scattered sons of men around the true and only centre of humanity, the stilling of the strifes of speech, the healing of the disunion of men, the attuning of all earth's many voices in the great song of praise, that, like the roar of many waters, is to sing

the praise of the wondrous works of God. All these are here. All these together make the scene the type, and, for an instant, the foretaste of that Kingdom of God which in that hour the Spirit was descending upon earth to found.

And now that we have clearly fixed in our minds the idea of the typical nature of this miracle on the day of Pentecost, let us contemplate it a little more closely. It may be that it requires now a closer study than the other two from the very fact that its typical character has not been so fully recognised as theirs. It may, perhaps, yield some truth to our search that we have not before seen in it.

Observe then the peculiar manner in which we are told this miraculous effect upon the multitude was brought about. The *effect* was that the words of the Apostles were intelligible to them.

Now this effect might have been produced in either of two ways. It might have been done by miraculously enabling these Parthians and Medes and Elamites to understand Hebrew or the Galilean dialect of it. Or it might have been effected by enabling these Galileans to speak in the language of these Parthians and Medes and Elamites. Practically the result would have been precisely the same in either case, and the miracle would have been as great. In either case the hearers would miraculously have been enabled to understand the speakers. But would the typical meaning and teaching of the miracle have been the same in either case? Very far from it. Here it would have made all the difference in the world. Observe. In the one case these Parthians and Medes and Elamites would have become so far Galileans that they would have thought and learned through the Galilean tongues. In the other case these Galileans became so far

Parthians and Medes and Elamites, that they thought and spoke in these foreign tongues. In the one case the hearer, in order to receive the Gospel, must have learned the speech or the idiom of the teacher. In the other case the teacher must have acquired the speech of the hearer. In the one case the disciple must have become, as it were, of the same nation with his master—in the other the master becomes, as it were, of the same nation with his disciple.

Now does not this exactly represent the essential difference between the old dispensation and the new, between the Jewish Kingdom and the Christian ?

Before this day of Pentecost every one of these hearers, before they entered the Kingdom of God, must first become Jews, must be adopted into the nation of those whose creed they would accept and whose privileges they would share. They actually had done so. These proselytes had become Jews that they might have the God of the Jews for their God. Their Gospel, their good news was a strictly Jewish Gospel ; their faith, a Jewish faith ; their hope, a Jewish hope. By accepting it they expatriated themselves ; they became, as it were, naturalised citizens of another nation than their own. They had so far ceased to be Parthians, Medes, Elamites, Romans, Greeks ; they were Jews.

And this, which was especially true of the Jewish faith, was, in a measure, true of all other religions save one. They were, one and all of them, intensely *national*. They reflect the climate, the scenery, the local condition of the country in which they take their rise. They reflect the temperament, the history, the traditions of the race to which they belong. The gods of the Greeks are unlike the gods of the Romans, as the Greek was unlike the Roman, and the gods of the East were unlike either. The genius of each nation revealed itself as distinctly in its temple as it did

in its dress, or its speech, or its laws. When the Roman accepted the worship of the Greek, or of the East, it was because he, so far, had become in his teaching a Greek or an Eastern. He prayed to other gods of other races just so far as he had become of that race.

Something there must of course have been in common between all these religions—something as it were of that original mother-speech of prayer in which all nations learn to say “Father,” but all that strange diversity of language, all that confusion of dialect in men’s worship, was the intensely local colouring, the nationality of their faiths. Whoever would learn any one of these must, as it were, first become one with them. The law of all conversions hitherto had been that the hearer should learn the spirit, should accept the nationality of the teacher.

And this was just the reason why no religion had as yet largely spread, just the reason why the very idea of a missionary religion had never entered into the minds of men. Because this change was something hard and unnatural, all but impossible; because men could not thus cast themselves out of their own nature and form another; because the mother-tongue was sweet and its associations tender and tuneful; because man still loved to hear of the wondrous works of God in the tongue in which he was born, therefore it was that no world-wide mission—no Catholic faith—had ever arisen amongst men. But now a new thing is to be seen amongst men. Now there is a new faith revealing itself, the very essence of which is its missionary nature, the very aim of which is to make disciples of all nations—a religion which is not to be national, or exclusive, but Catholic; a religion in which there were to be neither Jew nor Gentile, Barbarian, Scythian, bond, or free; a religion whose altars were to be on every hill; its temples wherever two or three were

gathered together. And what is the condition of its success, what is the law of its progress? It is this—not that the hearer is to learn the speech of the teacher, but that the teacher is to learn the speech of the hearer. It is not a Jewish, it is not a Galilean gospel, these missionaries have to teach. It is the everlasting Gospel; the good news of God for every man and every nation; the faith whose traditions are for all times; the faith which is of and for every man, every clime, every nation; the faith in which all the dim traditions, all the distortions, all the sighing and groaning of the nations of the earth find their true meaning and their real expression; a religion which is to find itself a home in every nation, a creed, a liturgy, in every language under heaven; a religion whose nature and whose history are both symbolised in this, that on the day of its utterance on earth men of every nation heard, every man in his *own tongue*, the wondrous works of God.

I have said this was a new thing in the world. The very idea of a Catholic Church, or universal religion, had never so much as entered into men's minds before.

But the realisation of this idea is more than new—it is marvellous, it is miraculous. We are so accustomed to the idea of the Holy Catholic Church, we are so familiar with the fact of Christianity sowing itself, taking root, growing in every nation and climate, that it has ceased to appear strange to us. We have come to think that it is the easiest and most natural thing possible to devise a universal religion that can adapt itself to the condition of all races and all countries. We think that all that is necessary is just to divest any one religion of its peculiar distinctive local colouring, to find out what are the great central truths it has in common with all others, and to preach these and all men will accept them.

Those who talk in this way show strange ignorance of

human nature and human history. They forget that to divest a religion of all that is local and *peculiar and natural* in it is to divest it of all attractiveness for the vast majority of men. They forget that it is just this natural colouring—just this interweaving of the faith of the nation with its traditions, its history, its local customs—just its intense and perfect adaptation to the nation, that gives it all its strength, all its hold upon the heart of the people. A cold, colourless creed, with its one or two philosophically accurate propositions, may unite the philosophers who compose creeds in their studies—it would not have an hour's life in the streets. It would share the fate of the attempt to constitute a universal language. The language might be most philosophically constituted, most admirable in its grammar, perfect in its power of expression, yet no one would care to learn it. The multitude would cling to the old familiar speech, with all its old associations, with its dear, sweet memories, the speech of their fathers, the tongue in which every one of them was born. So would it be with this philosophically constituted religion, constituted solely on the principle of extracting the essence of belief out of each creed—the *residuum* after it had passed through the crucible of the manufacturer. It would have just this one incurable fault, that, admirable as it might be, no one would particularly care to learn it. Why should they? On the showing of the inventor it would be only the essence of the creed each man already possessed. He would have it thus, it seems, substantially already. Why should he forego those additions, those attractions which made the rest of his faith and which he had learned to love? At any rate no nation has ever done this; time enough to talk of it when it does.

But they forget another fact, that whatever might be the success of such an attempt, it was not in this way

Christianity did succeed. The religion that these Apostles preached was not their former religion pared down to a minimum ; it was not simply Judaism deprived of its local colouring, reduced to its central idea of one God. On the contrary, it was Judaism developed and enlarged ; changed, not by the taking away merely of old beliefs, but by the distinct addition of new. They did not go out into the world to preach the worship of one God and that only. They went out to teach the worship of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. They went out to declare the God whom all men ignorantly worship ; but more—that He had sent His Son to take upon Him our nature, to live and die and rise again. They proclaimed the fact of the Incarnation, the mystery of Redemption, the miracle of the Resurrection and the Ascension, and the coming of the Holy Ghost. They went everywhere, preaching Jesus and the Resurrection. And in the might of that name, in the power of those new truths, they went forth conquering and to conquer.

It was not, then, merely by what it had in common with other religions, but by what it had which differed from all other religions ; not by its old truths made clear, but by new truths revealed, that Christianity gathered its multitudes from every nation under heaven.

And one thing more is too often forgotten by those who look lightly on the miracle of a universal religion, of a Catholic Church. That is, the intensely local and national character of these very facts on which it rested and the circumstances under which it took its rise. Who were these men who went forth to preach a universal religion, to found a Catholic, world-wide Church ? Were not they all Galileans—the companions and friends of the son of a Galilean peasant, trained from their youth up in the narrow and exclusive tradition of the most

exclusive of all faiths, incapable themselves—incapable themselves for long after—of conceiving the idea of any Kingdom of God but a Jewish one? What did they go to tell men? Of the life and death of a Galilean, of a Jew. What were the sacred writings of their faith they carried with them? The writings of Jews. What were their dress, speech, habits, ideas? All Jewish, intensely Jewish! And yet out of this bigoted narrow nature, out of this local, national, traditional faith, by the hands of these practically Jewish teachers, went forth this story of a Jewish life—these words of Jewish writers; and it gave rise to a faith which alone of all faiths was found to adapt itself to all races, to naturalize itself in every country, to be no more Jewish than it was Roman, no more Roman than Grecian, no more Grecian than Indian; a faith whose bitterest opponents at every stage were Jews, who opposed it because out of the Book the Jews believed in it drew its clearest proof that a Jew was to be the Lord of all mankind.

Yes, brethren, the fame of that wonder has not died away in the streets of the world's cities. Still the messengers of the crucified Jew go forth with tongues of fire, and with words that speak to the hearts of all mankind. Still the multitude gathers, and still the wonder expresses itself—are not all these Galileans? These men whose writings move us teach us as none other do. These men, whose spirit fills ours even as the rushing mighty wind, are not all these Galileans? Those older writers whom they give to us—these prophets, whose words of fire burn their thoughts into our very hearts, these psalmists, whose songs express as no other can the hopes, the fears, the sorrows of our souls—words that in every clime and every tongue speak to counsel, to strengthen, to teach,—these men, whose faith is our faith,

whose hope is our hope, whose prayers are our prayers, are not they all, as it were, Galileans? And He to whom they all testify; He of whom the prophets foretold and psalmists sang, and apostles preached, and martyrs lived and died for; He whose story, told by their lips, gathered and still gathers all men of every multitude under heaven around His cross and grave; He whose *name* is breathed in prayer in every language under heaven—is not *He a Galilean?*

Whence hath this Man this power? How came this universal faith from this contracted and local creed? How from this narrow well, at which a few Jewish peasants quenched their thirst, has spread this ever rising, swelling and prevailing tide, which was destined to cover the earth? This is a strange fact, a marvellous fact, a miraculous fact. We believe that it needed nothing less than two great miracles to produce it; and nothing less than these can account for it. They are the two which are given as the reason of it in the first speech of its first preacher.

“God hath exalted—hath shed forth this.”

But let us look still more closely at this type of Christianity and see if we may discover in it anything more of the nature and condition of its progress.

Observe this exclamation, “*Are not all these Galileans?*” The hearers, it seems, although they heard every man in his own tongue, were able at the same time to perceive that the speakers were Galileans,—not by their dress, which must have been that of the Eastern peasant, but, doubtless, by their *speech*, by that *Galilean accent*, which we know betrayed the origin of one of them so lately. Observe then what we have here. We have Galileans who speak as if they were Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and yet not altogether and entirely so. Their own distinct nationality revealed itself in their new

utterances. They were as Parthians, and Medes, and yet they were Galileans too. The Galilean accent made itself heard through the Parthian or the Roman speech. Divers as were their tongues that day, one thing was common to all, their native Galilean sound. Is there nothing in the nature of Christianity which exactly corresponds to this? What is it that we have already seen that distinguishes it from all other religions? These two things—

1st—That it is a *Catholic* religion—a religion for all the world.

2nd—That it is distinctly a dogmatic religion, that it reveals to the world distinct facts, essential truths, to be believed.

It has, then, its central, its essential truths. It has also its power of adapting these truths to the temperament of every people. It has, as it were, its own native accent, distinct, irrepressible, unmistakable. It has also the idioms, the turn of expressions of each nation to which it speaks. It is Parthian, Median, Elamite, Roman Christianity. It is Eastern, it is Western Christianity. It is English, German, Celtic Christianity—and in each nation in its prayers, its rites, and ceremonies, its customs, its very theology, in many aspects even, it takes the national turn, adapts itself to the national temperament, and speaks to the national heart and feeling. It is and must be in all nations diverse, that each in their own tongue may hear.

But still this diversity *has its limits* : it must never be so great as to destroy original unity. The great central truths must never be let go or lost sight of. Still must the Galilean accent ring clear and distinct through all the diversities of national speech. Still must the great dogmas of the Christian faith be heard, though it be in many idioms.

But, on the other hand, this clear and dogmatic definition of truths must have its limits too. It must be confined to the truths that are essential, that are *central*. The unity must be maintained, but with it the diversity—with it the largest diversity—with it the widest variation consistent with the maintenance of the truth, which is its life. If either of these great principles is lost, or overshadowed by the other, then Christianity begins to lose its power and its charm. If, when the multitudes gather together, they hear only each his own tongue, each the exact reflection of his own feelings, his own temperament, his own beliefs; if Christianity is to be just what every man thinks or feels it ought to be, then Babel is come again, then a confusion, a chaos of unintelligible, unmeaning babblings takes the place of the speech that should proclaim the works of God. But, on the other hand, if, when they come, they hear no common intelligible utterance, no words that all men understand, but only the harsh, hard accents of some provincial dialect, only the hissing shibboleth of some sect insisting that the shibboleth be said as the condition of salvation, if the dialect be *all* Galilean, and there be no echo of the tongue in which each is born, then the multitudes, disappointed, offended, turn away—it may be never to return.

But if, while holding fast to the central truths of Christianity, those truths that are its very life; those truths that just because they are central truths must necessarily be looked on from many sides,—can hardly, perhaps, be altogether seen from any one point of view; if, while holding them, we also understand and do not fear to admit that there may and must be thus diversity of aspect; if we understand how absolutely essential it is to the growth of Christianity that this diversity should exist, that it should reflect the temperament, the genius,

the histories even, of each nation it enters ; if we understand how impossible it is, how undesirable it is that Eastern Christianity and Western Christianity, English Christianity and Indian, and African, or European Christianity be exactly identical in form and speech, and yet also how essential it is that they be identical in heart and spirit ; if our Christianity be at once thus sternly faithful and largely tolerant ; if it can keep its original accent and yet speak in ever varying idiom, then, and in the measure that it does this, will our faith flourish and spread, because it will be more and more the faith of the day of Pentecost. It will survive the changes and vicissitudes of the nation and the language, the philosophies and the sciences, the politics and the social customs, with which it blends itself. It will use all these, mix with all these, clothe itself, as it were, in turn with all these, find affinities in all these ; and yet all these be as its outward vesture, to be changed, folded up, cast away, while it still clothes itself anew in the new spirit, the new philosophy, the new metaphysics, which serve it again, as did the old, *but as a garment*, a fashion more or less becoming, a fashion which commends itself at the time and passes away when it has served its time. They perish, it endures. "For the *word of the Lord* endureth for ever."

Of course there follow from this two or three very clear and obvious inferences.

1st—That we do hold fast with a firm and unwavering grasp the great central truths, the eternal verities of the Christian faith ; not merely those central truths which it holds in common with others, but those which it holds *as essentially its own* ; the faith in the incarnate and redeeming Son, the eternal Spirit ; the faith in that name into which we are baptized—Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

2nd—That we as distinctly recognise the possibility, nay, the necessity of many forms of Christian life and Christian sentiment, and even of Christian opinion—which will grow out of these truths according to the temperament, the mind, the stage of civilisation of each nation or each individual. That we be not dismayed at this diversity—the necessary result of human imperfection—that we understand and recognise this fact, that the faith that expresses itself really in every tongue must adapt itself to the capacities of that speech. That, just as we would expect and wish our little ones to have a child's idea of God and Christ and Heaven; just as we would not be so foolish as to attempt to strain and hurt these infant minds with all the strong meat of our theology; so for nations, so for parts of the same nation, be content if their religious views be in proportion to their views in other things—a childish view, a peasant's view, and yet a *real view* of Christ and God, a real faith, but uttering itself in native and uncouth speech. That, while anxious that all should hold the Christian faith, we be not too anxious that all should utter it precisely in the same idiom.

Perhaps, in that case, our missions might gain the life and vigour they seem to need—if we cared that our Indian and African Churches be really native Churches, racy of the soil, and did not insist on forcing on the mind of the Oriental, the knowledge of all the metaphysics and all the logical distinctions of our Western Christianity; if we did not insist upon enforcing, in all its minutest details, the calm and staid solemnity of our Anglican rites upon more unquiet races than ours. It might be as well if we remembered that our mission is not to transplant a tree, but to sow a seed. In the one case, we do succeed in planting and rearing carefully a small and weak exotic;

neatly pruned and carefully tended, it does grow and live, and it is a remarkable proof of its vitality that it does. In the other case we sow in faith the acorn that is yet to be a great tree, and it grows in shade and sunshine, storm and calm, now bent to earth, now wildly tossing to and fro, its trunk scarred by the lightning, weather-stained, gnarled, moss-grown here and there, but strong and vigorous and sturdy, stretching down its roots deeper and deeper into the soil, flinging wide its mighty boughs, clothing itself still in the green beauty of its leaves and the golden glory of its ripening fruit; and the fowls of the air come to lodge in its branches, and we, the strangers who planted, bless and praise His name who gave this fruit of our labours.

But, lastly, surely we learn this lesson, that it is neither in creeds, however true, nor yet in rites and ceremonies, however produced, that the life of Christianity consists—that with them, in them, through them, must breathe the living indwelling Spirit. Not the tongues of fire, not the rushing wind, not the speech in other tongues won the crowds on Pentecost. It was this, that they who spake, spake as the Spirit gave them utterance—that they were filled with, were possessed by that mighty force which alone can fill and possess the world at last. Let us never forget this—all history of the Church teaches us that the most orthodox creeds, the most pure worship may exist, and yet no progress—no multitudes gathering—because the formula *is dead*; because, the worship unmeaning, it speaks no language, it utters no word that goes from the heart, and therefore never reaches the heart. On the other hand, the smallest fragment of vital truth, however overlaid with error, if only a living truth held by a living soul, may work again the miracle of Pentecost. It is the living man, the *new man* quite as

much as the new truths he has received and preaches that gives new life to the Church. Not Luther's doctrine of justification by faith only, but Luther's faith turned empires upside down; not the doctrine of conversion of Wesley and Whitfield, but their own conversion; not the doctrine of the saintly life, but the saintly life itself made the "Christian Year" the household words of the Christian Church.

So from age to age the Church has renewed her youth. As with tongues of fire, with sound of rushing wind, the Spirit of God has come down again and again to send forth living men to utter old truths with a new and living speech, as He gives them utterance.

Pray that it may be so still. Pray that the Church in troublous times have grace to hold fast the faith once delivered. Pray still that she be filled with the Spirit's power to proclaim it in its Pentecostal fulness—in each of us a Spirit's might—to speak, as the Spirit gives us utterance, the wondrous works of God.

THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD.

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PREACHED AT WINDSOR, NOVEMBER 30, 1884.

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. ^{and} If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”

1 JOHN ii. 15.

TO those who first heard the Apostle's command, “Love not the world, neither the things of the world,” it must have seemed easier to understand and easier to obey than it does to us. The world which they were forbidden to love was a visible one; it stood out before them in clear outline, sharply divided off from that other world to which they as Christians belonged. It was the world of heathendom; it was that pagan society which lay all around them, with its laws, institutions, beliefs, manners, customs, all so essentially different from their own. It was a kingdom which they had, all of them, at one time or another of their lives, deliberately forsaken in the hour of their baptism, when they entered into the new Kingdom of God. And none who had any moral sense, any desire for righteousness, could have doubted which of these two was the better and the nobler one. The pagan world of that day was an effete and a decaying thing, dying of its own corruption, all its earlier and healthier morality perishing, all things base and foul and vile flourishing within it. It was a selfish, a profligate, a cruel, a miserable, a despairing world; and over against it stood the new Kingdom of Christ, bright with the

beauty and the power of its new life, filled with the ennobling and sustaining hope of immortality; filled, too, with the tenderness and the purity of a new human brotherhood, born of the Fatherhood in Heaven. "Salt of the earth!" "Light of the world!" All the hopes, all the nobler future of humanity lay within its borders, all around it corruption and death. So visibly, so distinctly apart stood those two kingdoms then that the Apostle John—looking out, as it were, from the battlements of the new city of God that he and his brother Apostles had been building amongst men—could say, "We are of God, the whole world lieth in the wicked one."

But for us this state of things has long since passed away. Humanity in our time is not divided into any two such visible and separate kingdoms as those the Apostle saw. The world of our day has long since been merged in the outward and visible Kingdom of Christ; it is baptized, it is Christian; we call it Christendom. It accepts the faith, it owns the laws, it professes to follow the example of Christ. We cannot say of any visible portion of it, "This is all of God, and that altogether lies in wickedness."

Has the distinction, then, which the Apostle drew between the Church and the world vanished away? Has this precept, "Love not the world," no meaning for us? Is there no world for us which we are not to love, whose friendship must be for us enmity to God? And if there be, where is it, what is it, how are we to know it when we see it, how are we to shun it when we know it?

Assuredly there is such a world. It was not for Christians of his day only, but for all time that St. John was speaking. It was not for his own age, but for all ages to come that St. Paul spoke when he said, "Be not

conformed to the world, but be ye transformed in the renewing of your minds." It was not for the disciples only who slept beside Him in His hour of agony, but for "*all* whom His Father had given Him," that our Lord said, "I pray that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil that is in the world;" not to them only, but to us did He say, "My peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth give I unto you;" not for them only, but for us did he speak that word which has sustained the faith and hope of all his true followers since the hour when He spoke it, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." If, then, we would obey these precepts, if we would take to our hearts these promises and consolations, we must understand what is the world we are to shun, what it is to be worldly or worldly-minded, what, on the other hand, it is to be heavenly or heavenly-minded.

This is, obviously, a very practical question, it is one that must affect our whole idea and rule of life. To ask this question is really to ask, on what plan, on what principle shall I lay out my whole existence?

There are, it seems, two ways of living, so widely different that they are spoken of as if they belonged to two different worlds. Which are these, and how are we to know them?

At first this seems a very difficult question to answer—at least, if we may judge from the infinite variety of answers it receives from those we ask it of. All who accept the Bible as their rule of life agree in saying that the Christian must not be worldly, that he must fight against the *world* as well as the flesh and the devil. But when we ask what it is that you mean by being worldly, what a Babel of contending answers do we receive! To one man the world and worldliness mean one thing, to another something quite different. Each man draws some

line for himself beyond which all is forbidden, within which all is allowed. In the matter of amusements, for instance, one draws it at the theatre, another at the ball-room, another at a race-course, another at a card-table, another at a novel. It has even been drawn at some particular fashion or texture of dress. Literature, recreation, study, business, all have their various degrees and shades of worldliness.

So that practically, and as a matter of fact, it comes to this, that the world and worldliness are for a large number of worthy and well-meaning people just that pursuit, that indulgence, that amusement in which they do not engage and others do. The world they are to shun and dread is, in one word, always some one else's world—never their own. Is it any wonder, then, that those who make no profession of religion whatever, those who own themselves men of the world and nothing else, laugh at distinctions so nice and varied and so unpractical as these? Is it any wonder that they say to us, "It will be time enough for us to forsake the world, to shun its ways, to break away from its customs, when you Christians have agreed amongst yourselves as to what really is this world that we are to shun. We do not see how, nor why, your religious world, as you call it, is any better than—nay, we do not see, on your own showing, wherein it is really very different from our own. Meanwhile we find this world in which we live—our world, whatever it may be,—suits us well enough. It is not perfect, perhaps, but we are not going, at any rate, to give it up until you show us why we should do so, and until you show us some other and better one to which we may migrate from our own."

And yet they who so speak must be mistaken—there are, there must be, if we believe what Christ and His

Apostles tell us, still the two worlds essentially distinct and apart; and if so, it must of all things concern us to understand wherein they differ, and why one should be in friendship, the other in enmity with God.

Now, perhaps we shall most readily understand this question if, for the moment, we put ourselves back at that point when, as we have seen, men did easily understand it; if we imagine ourselves living in those days when Christendom was one distinctly visible world and heathendom another. Let us see what it was that caused such great difference and contrast between these two; why it was that the one was all darkness and the other all light; one a kingdom of death, and the other a kingdom of life.

Another Apostle shall tell us this. St. Paul, in the terrible description of the heathendom of his day, with which he begins his Epistle to the Romans, tells us that the cause of all its misery and sin was this, "that when men knew God they glorified him not as God." They changed His truth into a lie. They worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator. It was a mistake, a terrible mistake, they had made as to the nature of the world in which they lived that had caused all this misery. They made it their God, their only and supreme good. They worshipped it, they served it; and its worship and service were really their whole religion.

Many as the gods of the heathen were, they were, each and all of them, only so many forms in which men worshipped themselves, their possessions, their pleasures, their occupations, their passions. The gods of the heathen, by whatever name they called them, were, each and all of them, some created thing, which they had come to worship instead of God. They worshipped Power, Knowledge, Wealth, Pleasure, Force, Passion, Art, by

many names, under many forms; but they all meant the same thing, namely, something God had made and given to man put in God's place and made man's God, made the object of his trust, of his faith, his service. They lived for these things; they knew of nothing higher or better. And these being all of them creatures of this world, those who worshipped and served them were necessarily, therefore, living for this world, for this present life only. To be powerful, wise, happy in this world, to get as much as each one could of its good things and to keep and enjoy them as long as might be, this was all they asked of their gods, all they cared for in life. They had lost the thought of living not for self nor for this life only, but for God and for their fellow-men for His sake. They had lost sight of the truth that all these things they worshipped were not good or gods in themselves, had in themselves no power to make men happy, were only good for men so far as they used them for God's glory, because that is man's only true happiness.

And as they worshipped these so they served them, that is, they became their slaves; they lived for these and these only. These were all they had to live for. That other world of which we know, that eternal life which is revealed to us they had no thought of. The world after death was for them the shadowiest and gloomiest of things, a dim, unlovely realm where ghosts flitted to and fro, and sighed for the substantial joys and delights of the world they had left for ever. The idea of sacrificing anything in this life for such a life as that never entered their minds.

And then, as this present life was all in all to them, as they cared for no other, their one aim was to have and hold as much of it as they could grasp or snatch from others. Like hungry guests at an ill-spread banquet they

crowded and strove for place and food, and the strong trampled down the weak, the rich were gorged and the poor were sent empty away. And so the hungry hated those who feasted, and strife, and war, and cruelty filled the whole earth with violence. Every one was for self and none for another, or for God. This it was that made their life increasingly base, selfish, and therefore unhappy, and all this came from trying to live in God's world without God. This was their worldliness !

What then was the unworldliness of the Christian in Christ's kingdom ? It was that His rule of life was just the reverse of this. It was, "Worship and serve thy Creator rather than the creature. This world is not your good, is not your God ; not by its bread alone does man live, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. This world is God's world. He is the maker of it, as He is your Maker and Redeemer. But for you He has provided something better, more precious than any created thing, more precious than all creation—even Himself. Give thyself to Him, live for Him, serve Him, sacrifice to Him, if need be, all or any of those possessions, those gifts, those pleasures which He has given thee. Pass through this world as a stranger and a pilgrim in it, using it, not serving it ; in it, but not of it ; not depending on it for happiness, disregarding its claims, defying its rules, whenever these are not also God's. Do this and thou shalt have eternal life, that other life, that other world which He has promised to those who do this—not dim and shadowy, cold and repellent, but glorious, beautiful, full of satisfying joys and abiding pleasures that are at His right hand for ever."

It was in the power of this new life that Christendom went forth to overcome the world. It was in the might of that new spirit which held life and all life's joys and

treasures as nothing compared with the love and the favour of God, that men went forth to strive, to suffer, to die if need were, if only they might live for ever with God. It was this that made men brave, pure, self-denying, self-sacrificing. It was this that made them pitiful, unselfish, loving, helpful, no longer fiercely striving for this world's possessions (why should they, when they had another world to live in for ever?)—no longer hateful and hating one another, for self-love and the selfish and cruel life it causes were cast out by a deeper passion, even by the love of God. This was the unworldliness of the Kingdom of Christ then, and this it should be still and now. To be unworldly is simply not to make the world nor any part of it our supreme and only good, nor success nor joy in it our only aim in life. To be worldly is to do this. The world for us, then, is not any particular place, or pursuit, or pleasure, or occupation. It is all of, any of, these from which we have banished God. It is any realm or domain of life into which the thought of His presence does not enter and abide. It is nothing else than that far country which is yet so near to every one of us, that country, far from our Father's home and yet close to our feet at every turn, into which we enter whenever we take our portion of goods and seek to have and enjoy it apart from the Father who gave it us.

And now we see how simple and easy, in principle at least, is that distinction which we found at first so hard to realise. The question for us is never *where* we are, but *what* we are. We cannot fence off any part of life and say, on this side is worldliness, on that it is not. To attempt this is about as wise and hopeful as it would be to build a wall around us in order to keep out a fog or a pestilence. The evil thing is in the air. It rises up all

round us, it penetrates within our artificial defences and limits, it enters into our homes, it fills our churches, it fans the leaves of our Bibles, it mingles with the very breath of our prayers; it is in one word the *spirit* of the world that we have to dread, and that is everywhere. And this can only be cast out by the spirit of that other world and that other life to which God calls us, and which He is ever ready to give us, that spirit which, if we yield to it, will so "transform us in the renewing of our mind" that our whole purpose and plan of life shall be changed once and for ever, and shall become, instead of life for this world and for ourselves only, life for God, and God in all our life.

Such a rule, it is clear, frees us at once from all those petty difficulties of detail with which this question seemed at first beset. It is not a set of precepts as to this or that, as to when and how and where; it is a broad, abiding, simple principle.

How it shall be applied must vary with the circumstances of each individual life. What proves hurtful to one man's spiritual life may not be so to another's. The pleasures that tempt one man prove no temptation to another, what to one is most exciting dissipation to another is mere wearisome custom. But for all alike the same principle applies: avoid that which you find is drawing you away from God; shrink from that which you find is putting itself for you in the place of God. That is for you, whatever it may be for another, the world which you are to shun, and its friendship is and ever must be enmity against God.

To forget this broad, deep, searching rule, and to endeavour to avoid worldliness by measuring off some portion of this world's life, and dwelling within it, isolated

and apart from all the rest, is to make a double mistake and to do a double injury, to ourselves first, and then to our fellow-men. To ourselves, because not only do we not escape the spirit of worldliness by thus withdrawing ourselves within purely artificial limits and defences, but we often intensify it. There is no subtler, no deadlier form of worldliness than that which haunts, with its malarious influence, the little sets and coteries in which those who deem the world of common life all unworthy of them gather themselves together, thanking God that they are not as other men are, and yet standing farther off from Him, in their spiritual pride and Pharisaism, than the mere man of the world whom they look down upon, ay, even though he has not yet learned to smite upon his breast and cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Their "religious world," as they with an unconscious irony so often call it, is in very truth a world which they worship, a world whose favour they court, whose rules they follow with a slavish, timid obedience, and which is for them an idol that they serve with a truly idolatrous veneration.

Not to ourselves only, however, is such isolation injurious, but to others also. To the world around us such a setting up of an artificially religious territory must prove seriously hurtful. For in proportion as the citizens of the other world withdraw themselves from this present one, in the same proportion does the world they withdraw from grow more and more worldly.

The disciples of Christ are the salt of the earth, but if the salt be withdrawn the earth it should have preserved grows rapidly corrupt. They are the light of the world. But if the light, instead of shining out into all the house, is hidden under the bushel of some close-fitting sectarian covering, how great will be the darkness that will spread itself around! The world of ungodliness, left thus to

itself, without the counteracting forces, the restraining, purifying influences of that kingdom of God which should be in it as the leaven working grain upon grain through the whole mass, turns putrid with a terrible rapidity. And so, by such feeble and cowardly withdrawal of the Church from the world, the Church and the world both suffer. The Church becomes not unworldly but worldly, the world becomes, more and more, the devil's world instead of God's.

To what fearful evils, to what perversion and corruption of religion for the Church, to what desperate recklessness of unclean living for the world such a mistake must lead is clearly to be seen in those ages when the Church, appalled at the evils, the crimes, the horrors of paganism, instead of contending with them fled from them far away into the wilderness, built herself homes in the desert and peopled them with men and women who sought to lead in safety, far from all sight and sound of evil, what they thought was the religious life—a timid, selfish life of contemplation, and fasting, and prayer, and praise, but *not* a life of brave enduring effort and sacrifice for others' good, not the life that—deep-rooted in the love of our fellow-man, nourished by the joys and deepened by the sympathies of our common humanity—grows strong, and fresh, and free beneath the open sky of Heaven and the approving smile of God.

No wonder that religion, thus divorced from common life, became distorted, one-sided, fantastic, superstitious, unreal. No wonder that the common life of men, thus deprived of religion, grew fouler, baser, more and more monstrously wicked, until at last the sword of the barbarians, sent in judgment that yet was fraught with mercy, cleansed the world of its worst pollutions and

gave men back the sacred fire on the hearths of homes that, though rude and rough, were at least the homes of men and not the dens and sties of beasts. Never, since then, has the fatal experiment of trying to create a visible and material severance between the two worlds of divine and human life been tried on so large a scale or with such terrible results. But never, since then, has it been tried upon any scale, in any measure, without producing, in sure and certain proportion to the extent to which it has been tried, the like result: religion enfeebled, morality depraved, society degraded and debased.

If the Church of Christ is to keep a pure and undefiled religion, to maintain a true and high morality, to save human society from perishing of corruption, it must live the life of Christ in this present evil world; it must go about, as He went, amongst men, amongst all sorts and conditions of men, doing good, healing with a touch at once human and divine—human in its sympathy, divine in its power and purity—all manner of diseases; ever *in* the world and never *of* the world, never conformed to it, ever striving to transform it to the image of her Lord.

But, if we do this, if we follow this rule honestly, what shall we lose, what shall we gain? What we shall lose we cannot tell; possibly much in this life—pleasures, gains, success, friendship, honours—we may lose or we may not, as the case may be. What we shall gain, however, is certain: we gain our very selves, our true, our eternal life. Our Lord has summed up this question of profit and loss for us long ago. We may lose, He tells us, the whole world, but we must gain our own souls. What shall it profit us to lose our own souls and gain the whole world?

And yet, after all, do we lose so much by the choice? Is it true that he who gives up, in heart and purpose, the

world for God does always lose it even in this life? Surely not so. For when did man ever give up anything to God his Father that he did not receive back his own gift a thousand times enriched with blessings? We give ourselves to God : what do we receive back? A nobler, purer, better self, enriched with all the powers and graces of a nobler life! We sacrifice our goods, our wealth, our ambition, to God; we get back a contented and peaceful spirit which can dispense with wealth and success, and without which wealth and success are no blessings! We discharge the duties of our life for God, and there comes into these, even the smallest and the lowliest of them, an interest, a dignity, a beauty, unknown before, as we think of each one of these, this is the work my Father has given me to do. We give those we love to Him, dedicating and training them for Him; are they lost to us even when He takes them from us? Are they not, in the very act of that taking, given us back in the assurance of their eternal peace, joy, and safety in His presence? Are they not, for us, from that hour, treasures laid up for ever in Heaven, where the rust and moth of fretting care and change come never, and death may not break through to steal them away?

Nay, the material world itself, this beautiful earth on which we live, is it made for us less or more beautiful when we have learned to look on it as God's handiwork and God's gift to man? Surely, as we do so, it becomes for us glorified and beautified with that "light that never was on sea or land." Surely as we look on the starry heavens, as we walk by strath, or stream, or sea, the heavens above shine with a new glory as they sing, "The hand that made us is divine;" the earth grows lovelier as it testifies that it and the fulness of it are the Lord's. The sea has in its ever-moaning waters an under-song of

joy and hope, as it tells of Him who has set the sands for its perpetual boundary, and who holdeth its wild winds and waves in the hollow of His hand.

Yes, if there is a sense in which we may not "love the world nor the things of the world," there is another, a truer, a deeper sense in which we may love them all. The same Book which says to us so sternly, "Love not the world," says to us also, "God so loved the world" that He sent His Son to die for it. That world, His, our Father's, created by His power, redeemed by His love, that world—in Him, for Him, with Him—we may love; and that world, if we so love it, we shall one day enjoy and rule over with Him for ever and for ever!

ST. PAUL ON SOCIALISM IN THE CHURCH
OF CORINTH.

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PREACHED IN WHITEHALL CHAPEL, MARCH 11, 1888.

“That there should be no schism in the body ; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it ; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.”—I COR. xii. 25, 26.

THE Church of Corinth, when St. Paul wrote his first Epistle to it, was threatened by a serious danger, which seems to have caused its founder no small anxiety. It was the danger of schism.

Disunion necessarily tends to dissolution. And dissolution, in the common speech of men, is only another word for death. It is that resolving of the body into its component elements, no longer held together by the uniting principle of life, which is to us the one absolutely certain sign that life has departed and that death has taken its place. The rent and torn body dies. The house divided against itself falls into shapeless ruin. The Church distracted by schisms is in imminent peril of like destruction. Well, therefore, might the Apostle view with alarm the first tokens of this deadly disease in this society which he had so lately founded. When he hears that there are contentions there, he writes to them an earnest and solemn appeal for unity. As soon as he has written his first words of greeting, as if this thought were uppermost in his mind, he breaks out with a beseeching

entreaty in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that they would all think the same thing, and be all joined in the same minds, "that there be no divisions amongst them." And again, returning to this theme, he devotes nearly the whole of one chapter to an elaborate argument against schism, and a warning of the evils which must flow from it. His desire and prayer is, that there be no "schism in the body."

When we compare, however, the two places in which the Apostle, in this Epistle, deals with this subject, we see at once that he is dealing with two quite different forms of schism. In the former, St. Paul is dealing with schism in the form of contending parties; in the latter, with schism in the form of rival and contending classes. In the one, the evil thing takes the form of party spirit, resulting in wrangling and separating sects, each called by the name of some chosen leader. But in the other it takes the form of estrangement and hostility between ranks and orders in the Church—the higher placed looking contemptuously on those below them; the lower looking repiningly and enviously on those above them—the one scornfully proclaiming to its inferior, "I have no need of thee;" and the other, conscious of its inferiority, exclaiming, "I am not of the body."

The source of both these forms of evil is, of course, the same. It is the selfishness of human nature displaying itself—in the one case in the war of party against party, in the other of class against class, but each influenced by the same anti-Christian spirit of self-assertion as opposed to the spirit of self-sacrifice; each preferring the triumph of his party or his order to the unity of the body, and to the express command and prayer of its Head.

The manifestations of this evil, however, though springing from the same root, are, as we have seen, different

and distinct. And so, too, in a very remarkable degree, is the manner in which St. Paul deals with them. With the first, that of parties and party spirit in the Church, he deals briefly, almost contemptuously. It seems to him enough to ask these Paulites and Apollosites and Christites — “Is Christ divided? Was Apollos crucified for you? Were ye baptised in the name of Paul?” Sectarianism seems to him a thing so manifestly opposed to the very idea of the Church of Christ, that he seems to think it sufficiently dealt with by the mention of the one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, which constituted the unity of the Church, which these sectarians were threatening to destroy.

Quite otherwise does he deal with the schisms and separations of classes in the Church. Against these he directs a long, sustained, and closely-reasoned argument, in which he sets forth the true ideal of the Church of Christ, and shows how utterly fatal to this, how essentially un-Christian and anti-Christian, is the war of classes which he deprecates. He enforces this argument with that wealth of illustration, that dramatic force and vigour that always indicate that the spirit of the writer or speaker is deeply stirred within him. The idea of the Church as a body, every member of which is united by organic union with all the rest, each existing for all and all for each, nourished by the same life-blood, animated by the same vital power, united and subordinated to the one head; hurt, therefore, by the suffering, helped by the well-being of each and of all, is set by him before the Corinthians as of the very essence of their new society. And then this idea is, as it were, turned round and round, enforced, illustrated, applied, so that all may fully understand it, and may see how unreconcilable it is with those ambitious envyings and strifes, with which he contrasts

it; how unnatural, and therefore how destructive ultimately to the existence of such a body these must be.

Clearly, for some reason or another, St. Paul was more afraid of the war of classes than of the war of parties in the Church of Corinth. The reason is worth inquiring into, for the manner in which St. Paul dealt with these two forms of schism respectively is certainly not one which we, from our own experience, would have anticipated. If any one of us were called on now to address a pastoral warning to any Church against the evils of schism, we would undoubtedly give first place in it to the evils of religious parties and party spirit. Probably we should most of us be disposed to regard social divisions as more the curse of the State than of the Church, and though not indifferent to these, to hold that first and before all we should aim at the healing of party divisions and animosities within the Church, were it only that she might the better help to heal the social strifes of the State. Why, then, does St. Paul exactly reverse this order of importance and urgency in which we should place these two things? Why does he dwell so much more strongly, and at so much greater length, on the evils of social than on those of religious schism? The reason is, I think, this, that the Apostles were not merely the teachers of a new faith, they were the leaders of a great social revolution. The accusation brought against them was, that they were "turning the world upside down," and the accusation was fully justified by facts. The Apostles of Jesus Christ were the authors of the mightiest and most wide-spread social change the world has ever known. They overthrew existing institutions, they repealed old laws, changed old customs, swept away old abuses, redressed old wrongs; they introduced new institutions, new laws, new customs; they reconstructed society from its very foundations, and

stamped on Christendom not only a new religion, but a new social and even political character, which, commencing in their day, has lasted until now.

And these great social changes were effected mainly by the proclamation of three new ideas, which Christianity from the first embodied in its system, and which were ever on the lips of its first teachers: these were, Liberty, Equality, Fraternity. Not in the eighteenth but in the first century were these words first preached to men. The apostles of the French Revolution who produced them as their great discovery had all unconsciously borrowed them from the religion they despised and reviled. They are, indeed, essentially religious ideas, incapable of complete realisation in any merely political society, and capable of full and complete realisation only in that society which gave them birth. That the first teachers of Christianity preached these, and preached them earnestly and everywhere, we know from their writings. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free," was the promise of the Founder of Christianity to His people. "The glorious liberty of the sons of God," was the boast and the rejoicing of His Apostles. "Where the Spirit of God is, there is liberty," were the words in which the distinctive mark of the new spiritual Kingdom, the test and token of the Divine presence within her, was defined.

Equality, too, was to be another note of this Kingdom, distinguishing it from all other kingdoms hitherto known amongst men. "God is no respecter of persons," were the words with which its first converts from heathendom were welcomed. "In Christ Jesus neither Jew nor Greek, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free," were the words which proclaimed the abolition of all distinctions of race, or rank, or class, lost and merged for ever after in the one

common citizenship of all in a Kingdom in which rank should give no supremacy, wealth no superiority ; a Kingdom in which a fisherman might give laws to a Cæsar, and a slave be the ruler of his master.

A new brotherhood, too, appeared for the first time amongst men, in which all of every class and of every nation were alike and equally brethren, because all were equally and alike sons of one common Father ; a brotherhood of humanity resting on its only true basis—the Fatherhood of God. We of this day, to whom these ideas are familiar, can hardly realise how strange, how new, they must have seemed to those who heard them for the first time. What a marvellous power of attraction they must have had in a world, the greater part of which was groaning under the tyranny of one man ; a world that had become one vast prison from which none could hope to escape ; a world where the slave was the thing, the chattel, of his owner, where the plebeian was the despised client of his patrician lord ; a world of cruel, voluptuous selfishness, where suffering found no pity, and want no alleviation ; a world full of envy, murder, hatred, deceit, malignity ; a world where men were without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful, hateful, and hating one another ! Into such a world came the new Kingdom of Christ, the Kingdom of Him who was despised and rejected of men,—one of the people, poor, and preaching a gospel for the poor, blessing poverty and disparaging wealth, proclaiming Himself a Son of man ; the brother, therefore, of every human being upon earth ; and proclaiming, too, the equal preciousness in His sight of all the souls for which He came to die. How eagerly, how hopefully, with what joyful anticipation of redress within the new society for all the evils under which they were suffering in the old, must men have crowded round the heralds of

His Kingdom, the preachers of His good news for the poor, and the sorrowful, and the outcast amongst men ! Deep and strong must have been the ferment of these new ideas in the new society the Apostles were founding, and anxiously must the Apostles have watched their working in order to guard against the errors and excesses which are sure to accompany the revelation of all new ideas that deeply stir the hearts of men ; doubting whether even the new bottles into which they were pouring this new wine could stand the strain of its fermentation. That such errors did arise, that such excesses did break out in the early Church, we know, and we know, too, what anxiety they caused to its early teachers, and conspicuously to the greatest and most statesmanlike of them all, St. Paul. When we hear him, for instance, warning the Galatians that, though free, they were not to “use their liberty for a cloak of maliciousness,” or telling the Romans that they are set free only that they may become “slaves unto righteousness,” we listen to warnings against the abuse of the doctrine of Christian liberty. When we listen to the command to the new brotherhood that its members should “honour all men,” we hear the warning against the subtle selfishness that is the great danger of all associations and all brotherhoods—the narrowing of the love that is due to all, within the limits of the church or the sect. And so in this argument addressed to the Corinthians, we hear a warning against the misunderstanding and the consequent abuse of the great doctrine of equality, which was already giving rise to serious evils, and a setting forth, by contrast with it, of the true and only sense in which equality can be said to be the note of the Kingdom of Christ.

Let us consider, then, a little more closely this first instance of revolt against inequality in the Christian

Church. The Corinthian converts were evidently surprised and dissatisfied with the unequal distribution of rank and office in the Christian Church. They found themselves members of a society in which there existed gradation of office from the highest to the lowest. They found the ruling head, the guiding eye, the toiling hand, the sustaining feet, of a highly complex organism. They found that in this body there were "members to honour and members to dishonour;" members so precious that the body could not survive their loss, and others so insignificant that it would scarce be conscious of their loss. And they found that all this was ordered and appointed by an absolute and seemingly arbitrary will. "God had set in the Church, first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers; after that, miracles; then, gifts of healings, helps, diversities of tongues." And they found, moreover, that this diversity of office sprang out of original diversity of gifts. To one is "given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge; to another the gift of healing; to another the working of miracles;" and so on. And these diversities of gifts led to "diversities of administration"—the office being determined always by the possession of the gift.

They found, that is to say, a seemingly arbitrary distribution of what might be termed spiritual birth-gifts bestowed on each convert as he entered into the new society. Baptism brought with it, as it were, a birthright to certain offices. The higher the gift, the higher the office, but gift and office were bestowed upon each person absolutely as God willed. And this it was which seemed to have so offended these converts from the old world to the new. In the old order which they were leaving they could understand the existence of such irregularities. They had seemed to them always natural, inevitable;

they could not conceive of any natural society without them. But this was a supernatural society, in which God was making all things new. Why should these old-world distinctions obtain here? If it be the common Father who is distributing gifts to His children, why should He distribute them so unequally? Why should one have so much and another so little? How is this consistent with our equal relation to Him and our equal share in His love? Naturally, therefore, did this inequality of rank and privilege in the new brotherhood give rise on the one hand to the envy of the lowly, and on the other to the pride of the highly placed. The one, envious, dissatisfied, exclaiming to his brother, "If I am not as thou art, I am not of the body"; the other, in the exclusive pride of his privilege, replying, "I have no need of thee." And, naturally, too, would there follow from this separation, estrangement, strife at last of class with class and rank against rank. And St. Paul, beholding this, trembled. There was schism in the body.

And now let us see how St. Paul dealt with this schism. He does so, in the first place, by reminding them that this inequality is of Divine appointment. The Holy Spirit of God, he tells them, has "divided to every man severally as he willed." It is the Father's will which has assigned to each, both his place and the gifts which qualify him for the place. The whole is of His ordering, and of His alone. For those who realise the true idea of a Divine brotherhood, complaint and discontent is by such a declaration at once silenced, and that not merely because they owe obedience to the Father's will, but because they have a perfect assurance of the Father's love. The place which He has appointed, the gift He has bestowed on any one of them in His Church, must be for him the best. There and not elsewhere, thus and not otherwise, can he

best accomplish the true end of his being, which is to glorify God and be happy with Him for ever hereafter. Such a thought checks at once the selfish pride of the brother of high degree, and the selfish envy of the brother of low degree. To the one it says, you are of the body, as truly, as really so, as the most honoured and high-placed member of it is, and your place in it is chosen for you by your Father's love. To the other it says, you are where you and what you are only by your Father's will. What hast thou that thou didst not receive? Who art thou, mere creature, as thy lowlier brother is, of His sovereign grace, that thou shouldst exalt thyself as if it were for thy merit, or from any special affection for thee, that He has chosen thee to fill the place thou holdest? Say not, then, to your brother, I have no need of thee, seeing that his Lord and yours has need of him for the common work on which you and he are engaged.

But in the next place, the Apostle goes on to show the Corinthians how this unequal order is not a merely arbitrary appointment, but one essential to the welfare of the Church. That Church, he tells them, is a body, and to the very idea of a body, as a living organism, diversity of function, and, therefore, diversity of membership, is essential. A body without members is hardly conceivable. It is found, if it ever is found, only in the most rudimentary forms of existence. And the higher the order to which the living thing belongs, the greater the complexity of the organism; the greater, that is to say, the diversity, and, therefore, the greater the inequality of its members. All members cannot have the same function, nor can each function be equally important to the whole body. Some are necessary to its being, some only to its well-being. Some there are whose functions are so small or so trifling that they are scarcely discernible; we hardly know why

they should be there, or what the body would lose by their removal. Nevertheless, they are there, and in this divinely-constituted organism, they are not there without a cause. Each must in some way contribute to the life, or the health, or the happiness of the whole, else were it not in the body; members of the body that seem to us more feeble being, nevertheless, in some respects necessary. And this thought tends to check all tendency to schism, for it sets before each one of the members in the body the thought of something higher and nobler than himself, even that body of which he forms a part. It says to each in turn, forget you your greatness, forget you your littleness, in the thought of the infinitely greater importance of that body of Christ your Lord of which you are a part. Let pride and envy alike vanish from your hearts in the thought of the greatness and the glory of Him who is the Head of the body, and to whom every member of it is equally joined, and whose service, whether in the highest or the meanest capacity, is a high and undeserved honour to every one engaged in it.

There is, however, yet another dissuasive from schism, more powerful by far than the thought either of the Divine will which has ordered, or the conditions of the body which require, the inequality that promotes disunion. It is the thought of the unity which, spite of this diversity joins these together one and all. "Ye being many members are one body." "The whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." Christians are, therefore, one, not merely by the oneness of their faith, nor yet by that oneness of aim and purpose such as binds together other societies, but by the unity of one common life which lives in each,

and is communicated from each to all, and from all to each. This is not the artificial unity of association, but the organic unity of a living body, in which the life and vigour of the whole strengthens that of each member, and that of each member strengthens the whole ; in which, if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it, and if one member rejoice, all the members rejoice with it ; and this instinctive sympathy is irrespective of the importance or the comeliness of the respective members. Disease and deformity do not make us hate our own flesh, but rather make us tend and cherish it all the more. The foot cannot receive a wound and the head not feel for it. The hand cannot be hurt and the whole body not feel a pang of sympathy.

In such a body no member is superfluous. The very least, the meanest member, is essential to the perfection and the symmetry of the whole. No one member can truly say to another, "I have no need of thee." The saints in rest cannot say it to us on earth, for they without us cannot be made perfect, and waiting for our perfection they cry still—"How long, O Lord, how long?" We cannot say it to any Christian upon earth, for without him we cannot "have our perfect consummation and bliss." The outcasts we would reform, the heathen we would evangelise, the Christian yet unborn for whom we pray, we have need of all these, for they are of the elect from all the earth for whose gathering in "the manifestation of the sons of God" still awaits its accomplishment. They are of the number which, in our hour of deepest sorrow, as we stand beside the unclosed graves of those we loved and mourn, we beseech our Lord "shortly to accomplish" and so to hasten His coming.

And from this sense of unity should come, mightiest of all uniting influence, the power of Christian love! As

through all this body flows the life-blood of its spiritual existence, so throughout it all should branch out the all-pervading nerves of Christian sympathy. In such a body there should be no schism, for no member of it can ever truly say to another, I have no need of thee. Love craves still for love, and seeks for opportunities of service. None should ever have occasion to say, I am not of the body, for he would know that the oneness of the body brought him unfailingly the sympathy, the help of its stronger, healthier members. So love in this, too, as in all other things, would be the fulfilling of the law, burning out with its divine fire the selfishness of envy and the selfishness of pride ; bringing still the mutual affection and the mutual service of true brotherhood to heal the estrangements and to appease the strifes which inequality provokes, enabling the brother of low degree to look ungrudgingly on the rank of the brother of high degree, because he is his brother ; constraining the brother of high degree "not to mind high things, but to condescend to men of low estate," because they are his brethren for whom Christ died.

Such was St. Paul's ideal of a Christian Church, an ideal full of social inequalities, yet pervaded all through by a sense of a true—the only true—equality, in which all are not, indeed, equal members, but all are equally members of the Body of Christ ; an equality of brotherhood which makes men tolerant of inequalities of rank ; an ordered and appointed inequality of rank, which is ever tempered by the sense of perfect and equal brotherhood, resting, all of it, upon the sense of a common Fatherhood of God in Heaven ; a system of fraternity and of equality—the only true fraternity and equality possible for men—resting on the three great pillars which sustain the confession of the Church's faith : "I believe in God

the Father, in God the Son, and in God the Holy Ghost"—in God the Father, who, with a Father's wisdom and a Father's love, has ordered to each man his place in the world as it hath pleased Him : in God the Son, who has given to every member of the humanity He has redeemed an equal share in His redeeming mercy, an equal inheritance of happiness : in God the Holy Spirit, who, infusing into the hearts of God's children the spirit whereby they cry, Abba, Father! teaches them to recognise the true brotherhood of the sons of God.

The Church is not the only Society that suffers from the danger of schism. The State knows it only too well, and knows it in its acutest and most dangerous form—the estrangement and the strife of classes. Perilous as party strife may sometimes prove to the welfare of a community, its perils are as nothing to those of social warfare. The one may be, and often is, nothing more than the petty squabbles of party politicians in their ignoble strife for place and power ; mere passing disturbances, which do not greatly move the deep current of a nation's life, which flows its way unheeding the shouts and gesticulations of the hostile armies that line its banks. The other stirs it to its very depths. It swells its waters with a sudden flood, slowly gathered from many an unseen source, sweeping down at last in a rushing, roaring torrent, spreading destruction all along its course, until its turbid waters have cloven for themselves some new bed, and left the old one where they once flowed so peacefully a desolate and storm-swept ruin.

The statesman may regard with equanimity the tokens of political contention in the State. He may listen calmly enough to the watchwords of the contending parties as every man is saying, I am of this man, and I of that. But he is no true statesman if he listen with like equanimity

to the sounds of social strife. He will hearken, if he is wise, with a beating heart whenever he hears from one class the cry, loud, passionate, and yet with its undertone of sorrow like to the sobbing sigh of the rising storm—"We are not of the body;" and from the other the answering challenge, stern and angry, and yet with its undertone of fear—"We have no need of you." These are the watchwords of a long-descended strife, a strife that wakes up again and again in fierce spasms of wrath. Whenever the House of Have finds itself in sudden, sharp encounter with its old hereditary foe, the House of Want; whenever the old contrast breaks sharply out between wealth and ease and poverty and toil, between the high culture of civilisation and the worse than natural savagery that seems to fringe all high civilisation, as the dark moraine fringes the course of the clear and polished glacier, then it is that brave men fear and wise men are perplexed, and all who love their country look around for counsel and for help to heal this "schism in the body," which, if not healed, must end in death.

And is not the danger of such a schism as this the special danger of our day? Are we not at this moment imperatively called to attempt the solution of great social questions which threaten, if they are not wisely solved, to tear in sunder society itself? In all the years of the centuries that have elapsed since these two voices rang loud and clear throughout Christendom, have they ever been heard louder, more ominous of coming storm, than we hear them now? The old party cries, the watchwords that used to gather men into opposing bands for political contests, are fast dying away, and in their place are heard those older ones, old as society itself, which gather men to far deadlier strife—cries which are, or seem to be to those who engage in them, battle-cries that summon men to a

combat of life and death—the right of the many to live, and to live happily: the right of the few to live more happily than the many: the right of human beings to food and shelter and housing at least as good as that which rich men give to their cattle, and to rest and recreation at least as large as merciful men give to their beasts of burden; and as against these, the right to accumulate wealth, however vast, and to enjoy it, however selfishly or luxuriously: the right of the employer to buy labour at the cheapest rate to which hunger can force down his market: the right of the white slave of the sweater to some larger share in his owner's profits than just serves to keep together an unhappy soul in a half-starved body.

These are the questions, no longer of the study but of the street, which are on the lips of all men and in the anxious thoughts of many. They are not—we take a miserably shallow view of them if we say they are—merely the watchwords of the socialist and demagogue. They are cries—exceeding bitter—wrung by sharp distress from the hearts of suffering men and women and children, and they are rising clearer, louder, year by year, and shaping themselves into articulate demands, which our statesmen seem not to know how either to grant or to deny. At such a moment what has the Church to offer in the way of help and counsel to the nation? What have we Christians to say—not as politicians—but as Christian men and women? What have we, as the servants of the Peacemaker, the disciples of the Healer, what have we to say that may help to make these wars to cease in all the earth, and to heal these “wounds and bruises and putrifying sores” that are making the whole head sick and the whole heart faint in that body political of which we are the members?

Something, at any rate, there is which some of those

who are engaged in this strife have to say to us, and we would do well to hearken to it carefully. They are saying to us, "It is your Christianity which is largely the cause of these troubles. It is your false idea of a life to come which has drawn away the thoughts of men from the great pressing problems of this present world to the question how they are to prepare for another which has no real existence; which has set men upon saving their souls instead of giving all their thoughts to the saving of their own and other men's bodies. Give all this wasted thought and energy to the life that now is, with the added incentive that there is no other life than this, and then as things secular grow to their true importance in men's minds, and Christianity shrinks at last into a chapter in a book, how many of these troublesome problems will be solved by the concentrated thought and purpose of mankind! These newer methods will surely bring us nobler aims and freer, happier lives—as men, no longer distracted by the dream of an imaginary Heaven hereafter, set themselves with one accord to the making of a real heaven here on earth!" Well! To such prophets we offer our prophecy in turn. We will suppose that it is done as you desire, that you have obliterated from human thought the ideas of God and the soul, and of a life to come. What then? Why this. That the old question, still unsolved, will confront you, terrible and pressing as ever. You will still have to deal with the old problem of the unequal distribution of the good things of life. Social inequality is not, as you fondly imagine, an artificial thing produced by evil, unjust and unequal laws. It is a natural thing inherent in human nature itself—ineradicable, therefore, by any laws that you can make. Social inequality is simply the outcome of original physical inequality. It springs now, as of old, from the diversities of gifts which God, or if you prefer it, Nature

has bestowed on men. When you can tell us why one man is strong, another weak, or one healthy and another sickly, one man wise and another foolish, one man brave and another timid, one man crafty and another simple, we will tell you why one man is rich and another poor. For riches and poverty came originally—come largely now—from the strong hand, and the strong brain, and the resolute will which some men have and others lack, and these natural forces will—just because they are natural—assert themselves in spite of all your attempts at artificial repression. Make all men, if you can, socially equal to-day, they will begin to be socially unequal to-morrow. One man will have begun to save and another to waste, one to plan and another to dream, one to cheat and another to be cheated. The strong will have begun to oppress the weak, the cunning to deceive the foolish, the brave to overcome the timid, and thus wealth, which waits still upon strength, will redistribute itself in spite of all you can do to hinder it. You can no more hinder this by your sumptuary laws or your schemes of redistribution than you can bring about fine weather by setting your barometer at set-fair, or change the rising and falling of the tides by changing the figures in your almanack. Sooner or later—and sooner far than later—you will have to deal with just the same social problems that afflict and perplex us now. The poor, we venture to prophesy, will not have ceased out of the land because you have made religion to cease. You will hear once more the two voices—“I am not of the body,” and, “I have no need of thee.” And when you are thus once more confronted with this old-world problem of social inequality, what shall you have to say to those who suffer from it as of old? One at least of our methods of dealing with it you will certainly have to adopt. You will have to tell men, just as we tell them now: This state of things is

necessary, is inevitable, but not, of course, you will say, because God the Father has so willed it,—that would be to revert to obsolete superstition. For the word God you must substitute the word Nature. Instead of saying God wills this, you must say, Nature has ordained it—using the word Nature, be it observed in passing, in exactly the anthropomorphic way in which you forbid us to speak of God. Nature then, we will suppose, is to be credited with this sad necessity for the unequal distribution of the pleasures and the joys of life. Will you, in that case, have mended matters much? Will you have helped much to heal the soreness of envy and the hate of want, when you tell the envious and the needy that their lot is the result of a decree of Nature? Doubtless this announcement will be a quite sufficient answer to any plea of right, for Nature knows no rights. She knows of forces only. Her utterance to every living creature is simply this, “Live if you can, and live as you can. Live on if you are strong enough to survive in the struggle for existence. If not, perish, and the fittest will survive you.” The agonies of your struggle in the process of extinction no more concern her than do the flutterings of the leaves as they fall in winter from the trees, or the moaning of the waves as they are lashed by the storm.

But when you have said this,—and you must say it and nothing else—somehow, we think, you will not have done much more for the healing of the schism in the body than we can do now, when we tell men that this inequality is the will of a wise and loving Heavenly Father who, though He sorely tries them here, has another world in which to compensate them for their sufferings in this.

Or you will, perhaps, adopt another of our methods? You will proclaim the universal brotherhood of man. You will tell all men that they are brothers, though you do

not exactly know why they are so, and you will exhort them to deal with each other as becomes brethren. You may do this, but there is one thing that you cannot do. You cannot create the brotherhood that you proclaim. You cannot make men feel they are brothers just because you say that they are so. They will ask for the evidences of this new revelation of yours quite as sceptically as you ask for the evidences of ours, and you will, we imagine, have greater difficulty in supplying them. You will not so easily persuade men whom you have taught that they have no common Father, that somehow or other they are, for some reason unknown to science, members of a common brotherhood. Your brotherhood would be but a phrase, ours is a fact; yours is but a word in a book, ours a law written in the hearts of men.

But you will try, perhaps, to make this brotherhood a reality; you will proceed to enforce it by statute. You will pass great social laws, which, if they do not make men feel, will, at least, aim at compelling them to act, as if they were brothers. If you do you will fail, utterly and universally, as all men have always failed who have tried to do violence to human nature. What is unnatural is, for every legislator, in the end impossible. And if inequality be the natural condition of men, as we have seen it is, Nature will defy, will escape from your laws in some way or another, and assert herself in spite of them. You will only have repressed her forces in one direction to insure their breaking out in another. For the selfish envy of the poor you will have substituted the grudging rancour of the despoiled and plundered rich; for the tyranny of the few over the many, the more greedy, more cruel, and more hopeless tyranny of the many over the few. In order to effect this new compulsory fraternity, you must first and necessarily have destroyed liberty, and the irrepres-

sible desire for liberty will resent and resist and at last overturn the intolerable despotism of your law-made brotherhood. The schism in the body will yawn as wide and as deep as ever. For law is impotent to effect that which can only be effected by love. The sacrifices that love readily and joyfully makes, it would be a monstrous injustice and cruelty to demand by law. A Howard dying of the plague that infected the prisons he visited, a Father Damien* expiring of the loathsome disease he has caught from the lepers for whom he has given his life, are sublime examples of the spirit of Christian brotherhood. But can we even imagine a law that should have compelled such sacrifices as these? No! you cannot enforce the precepts of the Gospel by legal enactments. You cannot translate into Acts of Parliament the ideal teachings of the Sermon on the Mount. You may link together, perhaps, scraps of precepts borrowed by you from the Book which you tell us is a dead imposition, and you may knit them one to another by closest mechanical union in your new social system. But your great army of dry bones will never stand upon its feet and walk, for no breath of Heaven will ever bid these dry bones live. And so you will at last discover that to say, Be my brother or I will kill you, is not quite so powerful a spell wherewith to conquer the evils that afflict humanity as that old despised one you would have us discard—Be thou my brother for the sake of the Father who created and the Christ who redeemed us both. Believe us, you may succeed in des-

* On leaving the church the preacher was stopped by one of the congregation, who told him that he was shortly going to join Father Damien, and intended to tell him of the reference here made to his work. "My blessing," the Bishop replied, "he will not care for, but tell him that he is constantly in my prayers." This message was duly delivered, and Father Damien sent him in reply his photograph with a few lines of grateful thanks.

stroying the brotherhood of love—you will never replace it by a brotherhood of law.

We do not, therefore, greatly care to discuss with these prophets of an impossible equality, and these preachers of an unreal fraternity, the future which they foretell but can never realise. Far more does it concern us to hearken to and to answer, if we can, another and a very different challenge. It is the challenge and the complaint of the poor to whom we preach this brotherhood in Christ. What they are saying to us is this: What is your Christianity to us? What can it do for us, not in the next world, but in this? You tell us that it has the promise of this world as well as of that which is to come. How is it fulfilling that promise? Can it feed the hungry and clothe the naked? Can it deliver us from the bitter anxieties and sad weariness of our present lot? Can it give us happier lives than those we are now compelled to live? If it cannot, we will have none of it. The Christ you preach had compassion on the multitude. He fed the hungry. He bid the rich sell all and give to the poor. When your Christianity does this we will listen to you, and not till then. Meanwhile, go—preach it to the rich; it is no Gospel for us!

To answer rightly such a challenge as this needs courage and faithfulness, as well as wisdom, on the part of the Church. She needs courage to tell the poor man that it is not the aim or object of Christianity to make all men happy, but to make all men holy; that physical comfort is not the highest condition for men—that it is even possible that the highest condition can only be reached by any man through physical discomfort, whether that of want or of voluntary self-denial: that if her Master has said it is hard for a rich man to enter into His Kingdom, He was not thereby teaching men that the

poor in His Kingdom should become rich ; rather was He teaching men that in His Kingdom there was a greater blessing than wealth, which wealth might even hinder men from owning. She must have the courage to tell men that it is not her mission to help humanity by altering the laws of the State, but by altering the hearts of men. She must dare to say as her Master said of old to him who said unto Him, " Master, speak unto my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me,"—" Man, who made Me a judge or a divider over thee ? "

But when she has said this, has she said out all her words to those who in the State are striving for the mastery ? No ! She has another message, and one that needs far more of courage and of faithfulness to deliver. It is her message to the rich. To them she has to preach the gospel of fraternity as it was preached of old by Christ and His Apostles ; as, alas ! it is too tamely and too feebly preached now. She has to tell the rich man that in the poor man at his gate he sees a brother for whom Christ died—sees Christ Himself—hungry and needing to be fed—sick and needing to be visited, naked and needing to be clothed ; sees one who, by virtue of his brotherhood, has the right that no human laws can give him to the service of his happier brother's love,—a right, not to casual and careless and often hurtful alms, but to a careful inquiry into his sad lot ; to thoughtful and earnest consideration of how it may be best alleviated ; a right to his brotherly sympathy, to his kindly words as well as kindly deeds ; a right to share not only in his wealth, but in something of the grace, the culture, the refinement that wealth has enabled him to enjoy, and therefore enables him to communicate. She is bound in her Master's name not only to bind up the sores of Lazarus, but to plead his right in Christ's name to something more and

better than the crumbs that fall from the table of Dives, even though at that table she should find herself a guest. She is bound to charge those who are rich in this world to be "ready to give and glad to communicate" to Christ's poor a share of all that they possess. She must not fear to tell the man of rank and wealth, that rank and wealth in the commonwealth of Christ are, like every other possession, only talents lent by the Master to be used for His honour and His glory, and that the special glory of His Kingdom is self-sacrifice of each for all and all for each. She must not shrink from warning the brother of high degree to beware how he ever allows himself, in the selfish and fastidious isolation that culture and refinement are so apt to generate, to say to the brother of low degree, I have no need of thee. She must lift up her voice. She must cry aloud and spare not against those whose whole aim in life seems to be to "add field to field, and house to house, until there be no room." She must proclaim to all men that the chief end of man is not to live pleasantly and fashionably and to die rich; and that to have amassed millions, out of which no portion has ever been given or ever bequeathed to the service of God or man, is not, as some seem to think, the shortest and the easiest road to Heaven.

In a word, she must preach boldly, fearlessly, sternly, the duty of self-denial to the rich *before* she preaches the duty of patience and resignation to the poor. She must show to all men that her gospel of fraternity is a gospel for all men, is good news not only for the poor, to whom it gives promise of help and consolation in this life, but for the rich to whom it gives opportunity for self-sacrificing service to Christ their Lord, in the persons of His suffering members upon earth.

Then, when she has done this, and in the measure that

she has done it, may she turn to the poor and speak to them of their brotherhood with the rich and with the great. She may tell them how this, the only true brotherhood, rightly understood, is a reason not for repining envy but for patient and self-respecting acquiescence in the inequality which is the appointment of their Father in Heaven; that the thought of it should not lead the poor man to say, "Why, if such an one is my brother, should he be higher placed or happier than I am?" but rather to say, "I do not grudge him his higher rank or greater wealth, for is he not my brother?" She may teach him that in Christ's Church poverty is no disgrace and charity no humiliation, for that the place is of the Father's ordering, and the charity is a brother's gift. So only can we hope to see some healing of that schism in the body which no State laws, no external force can ever heal. So shall the Church prove herself still the messenger and the servant of the Prince of Peace—preaching to the rich, Despise not; to the poor, Envy not; preaching to both the only true gospel of equality and fraternity possible for men: equality of all human souls in the sight of the Ruler and the Judge of all men: fraternity of high and low, rich and poor, in this Brotherhood of Christ.

But should she prove unfaithful to this her twofold mission; should she ever lack the courage to preach the whole of this her gospel to all alike; should she fear to lose favour with the great or popularity with the poor; should she seek to win the support of the one by servility, or the trust of the other by lending herself to wild schemes of social change, crude attempts at effecting by the mere letter of the law what can only be effected by the power of the Spirit of Christ; if, forgetting her Master's refusal to divide the inheritance, she attempts to do so, whether in the interest of the poor or of the rich,

then assuredly she will fail, as all who have made the same attempt have failed from the beginning, and she will have lost in the attempt her power to help and to heal. No longer fitted to mediate between the contending parties in the social strife that may rage around her—slave of the one, or unwise partizan of the other—she will run the risk of eventually alienating both ; the rich and the great from their resentment for their invaded privilege and their threatened wealth, the poor in bitter disappointment for promises unfulfilled and hopes that have deceived. She will lose not only her secular position or privileges—for these she should not have so much as a thought—but that infinitely more precious possession, which should be dear to her as her life, the power to join together in the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace the many members of the Body of Christ her Lord. But if, on the contrary, she truly and fully understands her mission and her place in the State ; if, instead of proclaiming some new brotherhood, she set herself to revive the old ; if, instead of attempting to re-constitute society, she give herself to her true task, the purifying and the sanctifying of it, then to her may be given the power to save it too ; to save it from perishing through internecine strife ; to heal, as she alone can heal, that schism in the body which unhealed is death.

CHRIST IN US.

CHRIST IN US.

PREACHED AT WINDSOR, ON MARCH 16, 1890.

“Examine yourselves . . . prove your own selves.”—2 COR. xiii. 5.

THERE is at first sight nothing unusual, nothing specially remarkable, in the advice here given by the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians. Self-examination, the proving and testing of ourselves, is the obvious duty of all Christians. If we believe, as we do, that what we shall be hereafter depends upon what we are now, it is clearly our duty and our wisdom to ascertain from time to time what we are and where we are; to find out, if we can, whether we are or are not in the way that leads to everlasting life. Examine yourselves, therefore, prove your own selves, is just the advice which every faithful Christian teacher ought to give, and which every faithful Christian teacher does give to his hearers.

But although there is nothing unusual or remarkable in this advice considered in itself, there is something unusual and very remarkable in the purpose for which it is given on this occasion by St. Paul. When we look at the context we see that St. Paul is advising the Corinthians to examine themselves, not with a view to finding out what *they* were, but what *he* was; *not* in order to ascertain whether they were truly Christians, but whether he had been truly sent to them by Christ.

The Corinthians had been induced to doubt this. There

had been those amongst them who disparaged St. Paul's authority and denied that he was what he claimed to be—truly an apostle of Jesus Christ. And much of this Epistle is taken up in asserting his claim to this office and giving proof of it. And now, at the close of his letter to them, he gives them one more proof, and one that he evidently regards as the most convincing of them all. "Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, one that is not weak, but mighty, I will give it to you. It is this: Examine yourselves, prove your own selves. 'Know ye not that Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?' You will find, that is to say, if you seek for it, this: you will find Christ in you; and if you so find this—and I am sure you will—if you find that this has been the effect of my preaching and my teaching, then you can have no doubt that Christ has been speaking to you by me." St. Paul, we see, therefore, on this occasion does not doubt the reality of their Christian faith and life, or suggest to them to doubt it. On the contrary, he takes this for granted, and he takes for granted that they too will have no doubt of this, and then from this he argues—If this be so, then Christ is in you, and if Christ be in you then you can have no doubt that He has sent me to you.

In other words, St. Paul is here appealing to the personal experience of his hearers for the proof of the truth of their new faith, and the authority of their new teacher. He is telling them that there is, or that there ought to be, that in every one of them which should convince them on these points. In so doing, St. Paul is stating two great truths, as true for us now as they were for those to whom he first declared them.

1. That there may be, and ought to be, in every one of us, a proof of the truth of our religion.

2. That we may obtain this proof every one of us for ourselves.

Now if this be so it is hardly possible to overrate the value of this test of the truth of our religion. Its value obviously consists in this, that it is a test, a proof that lies equally within the reach of all men. There are proofs, evidences, of our faith, which are not within all men's reach. Learned and able men have written learned and able books in defence of Christianity; and perhaps there never were more of such learned and able defences of our faith than at this present moment, when so many deny and assail it.

But these learned books are in the libraries of learned men. They are not accessible; they are not always intelligible for plain and unlettered folk. Surely for these, and they are the majority of Christians, we need something simpler, easier, nearer at hand. It is the glory of Christ's gospel, He Himself has told us so, that it is preached to the poor. Is it not then a great matter if there be also a proof for His gospel that can suit the poor and the sinful,—some proof that needs no learning, no study, no keen skill in logic, to judge of; that needs only an honest heart, a simple, truthful dealing with our own consciences to enable us to judge, each and all of us for himself or herself, the great question of questions: Am I right or am I wrong in trusting my soul to Christ? Is it a cunningly devised fable, or is it a light from Heaven that I am following when I give myself to Him for this world and the next?

Let us see, then, whether we have such a proof as this in the counsel of St. Paul.

He tells us that if we examine ourselves we shall, if we are not reprobates, find "Christ in us." What does he mean? It is a very remarkable expression. It is used

in the Scriptures of Christ and of Christ alone. No one of His Apostles ever uses it of himself. Nay, no teacher of men, no preacher of any religion or of any philosophy, ever used it of himself before or after Christ. And yet it is constantly used respecting Him. We read of "Christ in you"; "Christ being fully formed in you"; "Christ in you the hope of glory." Nay, it is our Lord's expression respecting Himself. He speaks of coming to him who loves Him, and taking up His abode in him. He prays in His last prayer to His Father that He may thus dwell in His disciples, "I in them, as Thou, Father, art in Me." Surely this is something more than a figure of speech, and if it was, figures represent facts. What then is that fact, that spiritual fact in our experience, which we may each one of us ascertain and realise, that is implied in these words, "Christ in you"?

He has Himself answered for us this question in those words of His which I have quoted, "I in them, as Thou, Father, art in Me." He prays that, as God dwells in Him, so He may dwell in us; that is to say, that as the fulness of the Divine nature dwelt in His humanity so should the fulness of His human nature dwell in us; that He should make us partakers of His nature, that perfect human nature which He took to Himself that He might bestow it upon us, so that we should be fashioned anew in His likeness; conformed, as the Bible tells us, to His image; be made like unto Him in all things, who was in all things made like unto us; so that as man was in the first creation made in the image and likeness of God, the new man, the regenerate man, should be made anew in the image and likeness of Christ.

We shall understand this more clearly and fully if we think for one moment of the great law that governs all forms of life. Every living thing has its own form

or type to which it is always true, which always appears in it and so makes it different from every other form. The acorn that we plant springs up always an oak. The seed of wheat springs up always wheat. The root of the vine we set sends up always the branching stem, the clustering grape. Its seed is itself, never another. And this is true of our own race and our own life. The race, the family, are true to their ancestral type. The ancestor, the parent reappears in the child. Much he may have in common with all other men. Something he always has in which he is unlike to all others save to his own ancestor; so that it is a common form of speech to say when any such ancestral likeness is seen, there is the father, or the mother, or the ancestor over again. So when we speak of Christ being in Christian men we mean that He, the perfect man, has produced on earth a new type of humanity; something that the world before had never known; something which should be found in every true member of the Christian family, and which can be seen and recognised as the likeness of Christ.

What then are, as it were, those features of Christ that should reproduce themselves in every true Christian? How is it that the Christ in us should manifest Himself as He has promised to do to us?

Surely He will show Himself now as He did when on earth—

1. As the obedient Son of God.

He came on earth to do and to suffer His Father's will. It was, He tells us, His very meat and drink to do the will of Him who sent Him. His whole life of serving or suffering on earth was, from first to last, a task appointed Him of His Heavenly Father, throughout the whole of which His human will was ever absolutely one with the Divine.

2. In the next place, as He was the absolutely perfect Son of God so was He the *brother*, the absolutely true and perfect brother, of every man. He loved not this man nor that, but all men; all humanity as men. Bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh; touched with a feeling of our infirmities, bearing our sorrows, carrying our infirmities—He loved not only those who were lovable, but those who were odious: the lost, the outcast, the loathsome. He loved with a perfect love the race for which He came to die.

3. Lastly—He was a perfect man, the one only perfect man the world has ever seen in the perfection of His holiness; holiness which is something more than morality, something more than righteousness even—holiness which hated all evil as evil, purity which shrank from all things base and foul and evil with a natural repulsion. Holy, harmless, undefiled was that nature which He has promised to bestow on us.

In these three respects, surely, was the character of Christ a new thing in the history of humanity—a Man who had no will but God's will—a Man who knew no brother man whom he did not regard with a brother's love—a Man who knew no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth. And it is this His nature which He has promised shall be in us!

Can we then, as we examine ourselves, find in these respects the life of Christ living within us? Not assuredly in its perfection, for we shall not be fully like Him until we see Him as He is. But in its beginnings even, in its rudiments, can we discern the life of Christ? For life, if it is real, must have its beginnings—its growth, often its slow and feeble growth, towards perfection. Nevertheless it is ever true to its type; the spark we kindle is but a spark, but the life of the fire is in it that may

grow to a mighty flame. The spring blade is but the feeble beginning of life, but it is yet to grow and ripen into sheath and grain. The light of the dawn in its first streak in the east is a very feeble light, but it is the light that is yet to glow in the glory and the power of the noontide. The feeble wail and stretching hand of the infant is a very tiny life; it is to grow, it may be, to the hand of the warrior and the might of the mail-clad man. So the life of Christ in the heart of His feeblest follower may be but a very feeble beginning of life, and yet it is true, real life, and it will manifest from the first something of the Christian type.

When we seek for it we have to ask, not—Do I perfectly love God and man? not—Am I perfectly free from sin? but—Have I ever had even one thought of loving obedience to God? Has there ever swelled up in my heart, were it but for one moment, the thought, I have a Father in Heaven, may His will not mine be done? In that one thought, in that one word, there lived, there spoke in us the Son of God.

2. Have I ever felt in my heart a thought of love to my fellow-men? Not merely a feeble good-natured amiability, which in a languid way wishes well to all men, but a real living desire to save and help my fellow-men, to bear something of their burdens, to carry some of their sorrows? Have we ever striven to love those who are not lovable, who we know do not love, nay, may even hate us, and loved them for God's sake? In that hour, in that thought, there lived and spake in us the perfect Son of Man.

3. Have we ever felt in our hearts a hatred of evil for its own sake, because it is evil, because of its impurity, its vileness, because of its deadly power to paralyse our spiritual life? Have we, too, ever gone out to our hour of

temptation and striven with the tempter, and conquered by the might and the power of the Spirit of God? In that moment of temptation, resisted and conquered, there lived and spoke in us the perfectly holy Christ.

And it is when we find in ourselves these beginnings, were they only beginnings, of a higher life that we know that—just because they are not natural, just because mere unaided, unrenewed humanity never brought forth fruits like these—there is in us another, a higher life than our own; and then, remembering that this is just what Christ our Lord promised we should have,—promised that He would give us, we have the proof we need, the sure and certain knowledge that in us there is His life, in us begun and yet to be completed, His likeness; we recognise Christ in us, the hope of glory.

This is that proof of our faith which lies, as I have said, within the reach of every one of us. Ask the Christian who is striving to live the better life in the strength of Him who lived and died and rose again that he might be enabled to live it, ask him this: Are you full sure that there was in this world a Saviour, which was Christ the Lord? Have you weighed all the historic proofs of his existence? Can you prove logically beyond doubt or question all the articles of your belief concerning him? He may safely answer, No! This, indeed, I have not, perhaps I could not do, and yet I have that within me that convinces me there must have been such a Saviour long ago, for I know that there is such a Saviour *now*. I feel I know that he is delivering me from sin, that he is strengthening me against temptation, that he is revealing to me myself as I am and my better higher self as I feel it ought to be, and that He is helping me to cast off the one and to put on the other. Like

the blind man in the Gospel who was told to doubt Him who had healed him, he can make answer, "One thing *I know*, that whereas I was blind now I see; whereas I was paralysed for all good, now I can walk in the way of life; I feel this life within me, I know that when it is at its best I am happiest, strongest for all that my conscience calls me to do or to suffer; I know that when I am nearest Christ I am nearest my ideal of what men ought to be. Those sentences in my creed about which men, you tell me, are disputing, are the light of all my existence; those words of Christ my Lord which some would assert he never spoke, they are to me spirit and life. These are facts which no argument can deprive me of; nay, these are facts which no arguments can ever account for. The Christ within me witnesses to the Christ of the Gospels. By the light that He shed upon my path in life; by all that he has revealed to me of myself, by the triumphs, the victories He has helped me to win over my self; by the longing that I feel for the final victory when I shall be altogether even as He is, I know Him and I own Him as my Saviour and my Lord. To whom else should I go? He has the words of *Eternal Life*."

And not only may we thus gain evidence for our faith, but we may, each of us, be evidences of it to others. The life, the daily life, of each Christian man or woman may be, to those who believe not, a most mighty proof of the truth and the power of their faith. Men may scoff at his belief, they cannot scoff at his life; they see and feel in spite of themselves that there is something in that life that is higher, better, nobler than their own, that puts their own to shame. It need not be a great, an heroic, a conspicuous life—such lives there have been, there are—

the Church of Christ has her great heroes, her nobler army of martyrs; but she has also her quiet, humble, faithful, patient lives that are quietly, patiently, lovingly working out God's holy will on earth; and as they do so, showing out the power and the presence of Christ; epistles known and read of all men; none so lowly, none so obscure that they are without influence, without power of testifying thus to the truth and reality of their faith. The father to his family, the mother to the little ones that lisp their prayers at her knee, the loving brother or sister, the faithful friend, the godly, God-fearing citizen, each and all are giving to them just the strength, the evidence that lies in good men's lives. Small though the range of such influence, faint the light that glows from each such life, altogether they make a great light; just as when some great city is lighted up at night, each single light that gleams in each window-pane may be but a small one, but altogether they make the gleam and the glow that flashes and lights up the midnight sky.

So *lives still* on earth, in the lives of His servants, the ever-living Christ. So still does He walk the world, as He walked in the days of His flesh, going about and doing good, binding the broken-hearted, helping the weary, healing all manner of evil amongst men, and His works of old are thus wrought again and again. And as we remember how, since the hour of His resurrection, they have never ceased, how back from this hour to that there stretches the long line of torch-bearers, holding aloft the light of holy lives, there grows and compasses us round a cloud of witnesses, reflecting still His glory as clouds reflect the glorious light of the sun. Thus, linking the present with the past, the life with the creed,

the creed with the life, we gain a certainty, a deep, quiet and simple certainty, that no arguments, no coils can shake, of the truth of our faith. We in our turn can say the word of faith that has, from the hour when first spoken, expressed the strength of all Christian life, the help and peace of every Christian death,—I *know* in whom I have believed.

THE LIFE OF MAN AND THE GLORY OF GOD.

THE LIFE OF MAN AND THE GLORY OF GOD.

PREACHED ON THE OCCASION OF THE RESTORATION OF PETERBOROUGH
CATHEDRAL, 14TH OCTOBER, 1890.

“I heard behind me a voice of a great rushing, saying, Blessed be the glory of the Lord from His place.”—EZEKIEL iii. 12.

THESE words are part of the record of the preparation of a prophet for a prophet's work. The preparation of a great prophet for a great work is a great crisis in the history of those to whom he is to prophesy. Ezekiel was the Prophet of the Captivity. The nation of Israel, in its Babylonian exile, was passing through the fire of Divine judgment and chastening,—a fire which, whenever and wherever kindled, is never quenched until it has done its appointed work; and that work is either purification or destruction. Through and through, to the inmost core of the man or the nation subjected to its operation, it burns its way, consuming all that is dross, and purifying all that is gold—if gold there be to purify. If all be dross, if the whole being of the man or the nation has become corrupt and vile, then must that man or that nation perish utterly. If there be aught in him or in it that is good, then will that, and that only, come forth from the ordeal the purer and the brighter for its trial by fire.

The question, then—the terribly anxious and critical question—for the people of Israel, at the moment of

Ezekiel's vision, was how they should stand this fiery trial. Would they melt into the surrounding heathendom, completing in Babylon the apostacy commenced in Jerusalem; or would they—laying to heart God's judgments, understanding the day of their visitation—repent them of their rebellion against Him, renew the covenant of their nation's youth and with it their nation's life, and so, penitent, reformed, return to the land from which their sins had driven them? This was the question—supreme, momentous—that was awaiting its solution when Ezekiel was sent to “speak in the ears of the people the word of the Lord,”—a word of warning, and yet of comfort and of consolation; a message which, if they would receive it, would renew their faith and sustain their hope through the long years of captivity and exile; but which, if they neglected it, would rise up against them for their condemnation and destruction.

Well might the awful responsibility of such a message, at such a moment, fill the heart of him who bore it with a consuming anxiety. Well might he go forth to give it—as he tells us he did—“in the bitterness of his heart;” the bitterness of sorrow and indignation; the bitterness of fear and all but of despair. For they to whom he was sent were a “rebellious house.” As yet sullenly impenitent, they seemed to have no ear for warning, no heart for consolation. They would not hear; they would not repent. It seemed as if they would only provoke a further judgment and a final doom.

At such a moment, and for such a task, the Prophet is given a special preparation. It was that preparation by which every true prophet, every one who has to speak to men the word of the Lord, must be fitted for his mission. He saw, he tells us, “visions of God.” As he dwelt among his fellow-captives in their exile by the banks of the

Chebar, he tells us that "the heavens above him were opened," and "the firmament above him bore the likeness of a throne, and the appearance therein was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord!" Yes! he saw that which every man who would speak of God to his fellow-men must see, else has he no true message to speak to them. He saw the Lord. High above the world and the things of the world, he saw the throne of its Creator. Above the angry and scornful presence of his fellows, he saw the presence of their Ruler and their Judge. Beyond the darkness and the gloom of their earthly condition, he beheld the light and the glory of Heaven. And in the brightness of that light, the misleading mists and shadows of this lower world fled away, and he beheld things as they are, not as they seem. The world powers that loomed so large, shrank to their true proportions. Great Babylon, and her might and her magnificence, seemed to him but as the small dust in the balance. The angry, threatening voices of his countrymen were unheard in the rushing of the great wind that swept him, in the spirit, upwards and onwards, to the foot of the great white throne. The fear of the Lord so filled his heart that it had no room for the fear of man. His face was made "as adamant and as flint" against the wrath, or the threats, or the scorn of men. He saw them not; he heeded them not. He had seen visions of God. Thenceforth he was to "endure as seeing Him that is invisible!"

But there was for him not only a vision, but a voice,—a voice which gave him his mission, and which told him his message. And he records for us, in our text, the last utterance of that voice, which was sending him out upon his path of difficulty and of danger; the last word he was to hear as the vision closed, to cheer and strengthen him as he went forth to accomplish his mission upon earth, not

in the brightness and the glory of Heaven, but in the dull light of common day.

He heard a voice behind him "as the sound of a great rushing," saying, "Blessed be the glory of the Lord from His place!"

In these words the Prophet heard the aim and the motive of his mission,—the true, the only true aim; the true and abiding motive and mainspring of all work for God! That motive is "the glory of God." That glory, which the material world displays unconsciously, this moral world—the world of humanity—should manifest consciously and designedly. This is the one true and only aim of all our lives; that which includes, while it purifies, exalts, sanctifies, all other and lesser aims and motives.

Not for himself, not even for his fellow-men; but simply, singly, wholly for the glory of his Maker is man called upon to live and work on earth. This was the one sole aim of the one perfect human life which is our example. "Glory to God in the Highest" was the song that ushered in its birth. "Father, I have finished the work Thou gavest me to do; I have glorified Thee on earth," is the word with which it closes. "Whatsoever ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all things to the glory of God," is the law that should rule all Christian life and all Christian work for God.

Doubtless, in that aim are included the lesser and lower aims of our own happiness and that of our fellow-men. For the glory of God is not that merely of a creator or a ruler, but of a Father, and His highest glory is the final happiness of the creatures He has made. And therefore is it that the glory of God is a *blessed* thing—a thing for which men may bless His holy name, and sing songs of thankful praise. For His glory and their happiness are one.

But not our happiness, not the happiness of others, but that glory is our first and chief aim. Nay, for that glory—to promote, to manifest it—we must be willing to sacrifice our present happiness, and to teach all men to be ready to sacrifice theirs. We are not to live—we are not to teach men to live—as if present ease and enjoyment and physical comfort was the be all and end all of human existence. We are not to teach them that man's life consisteth in the abundance of the things that he possesseth; still less that the sole mission of the Church amongst them is to turn stones into bread. We are to teach them that men may glorify God by self-denial, by self-sacrifice, by patient suffering. We are to teach them that as there may be danger in wealth, so there may be a blessing in want; for that not physical comfort here, but eternal perfection of glory in Heaven with God is the true aim of man's existence.

To take this idea out of our work, this aim out of our mission, is to turn the Church of Christ into a sanitary club or a philanthropic association. It is to divest life of all its highest aims; it is to deprive wealth of its truest enjoyment, and rob poverty of its sweetest consolation; it is to substitute for the words—Blessed be the glory of God—blessed be the ease and the pleasure and the physical comfort of man.

And similarly, this principle of seeking ever the glory of God, as it should guide and elevate our social life, so it should guide, and elevate, and beautify our religious life and our religious worship. Our religious life is not to be a mere selfish saving of our souls, but a readiness to sacrifice soul and body, if need were, for the service and the glory of God. Our worship should have for its aim—not merely the edification of the worshippers, but the honour and the glory of Him they worship. Take this element

out of religion, and the life becomes timid and unfruitful, and the worship poor and mean as its own low ideal. Snug comfort, dull respectable decency, mean economy—disguising itself as spiritual simplicity—will be the best and the highest outward expression it can reach to. Not such the spirit that actuated those who built such noble shrines as that in which we this day worship. For the accommodation, the spacious and comfortable accommodation of the monks of Peterborough, a neat and appropriate unadorned building, comfortably weather-tight, would have sufficed. But they had nobler aims. It was in their hearts to rear a temple for the honour and the glory of God. For that they held nothing too great, too rich, too rare. They secured art in its perfection, architecture in its magnificence, wealth in its profusion, to do homage and service in the court of their great King. They planned nobly, because they thought nobly. The glory and the beauty of their work that we contemplate to-day, has, then, for us this its perpetual lesson, utters its enduring protest, against the low commercial spirit of utilitarianism in religion, whether in its outward and material expression, or in its inner spirit and aim. It makes for us its mute and yet its ever-speaking proclamation of the great truth—that we must cast self out of our service of God; that we must count nothing too good, too rich, too rare to be devoted to Him. It speaks to us to-day its great sermon in stone—Blessed is the aim, blessed is the end and completion of man's life, even the glory of God!

But the Prophet heard this voice from behind him. It followed him as he departed from the scene of his vision. Surely in a scene in which all is minutely and elaborately symbolic, in which every sight and sound has evidently its own appointed meaning, it is not without significance that this voice does not precede but seems to follow the Prophet

from behind ; speaks of the scene he is to remember in the past, and not of that which awaits him in the hereafter ; speaks, that is to say, not of the future but of the *past* !

For is it not the voice of the past that still must give to the prophet courage and strength for the duties of the present ? The present has—must have—its difficulties, its dangers, its discouragements ; the future its uncertainties, its doubts, its fears. The past alone has for us its assured certainties. Its voices tell us, not of what we may hope and believe that God is doing now, or will do hereafter, but of what He *has* done in the unchangeable past. Of this there is no question, concerning this no doubt. The past, with its records of Divine promises fulfilled, Divine deliveries granted, Divine mercies vouchsafed, Divine covenants kept, gives faith and courage for the present, hope for the future. The sun may seem to us setting sadly, gloomily, as in the dull, doubtful twilight, our footsteps wander and slip as we descend into the low-lying valley where lies the day's march of our life. We see the earth-born mists rise often thick around us, and we grope and guess our way, full often doubtfully and wearily. But as we look back “to the hills whence cometh our strength,” as the high mountain peaks of the past rise clear and sharp above us, bathed in the glowing light of the sun that gilds and glorifies their summits ; as our fathers tell us of the noble works that God hath done in their days and in the old times before them, we thank God and take courage !

So was it assuredly with this great Prophet, as he went forth to his work for God. In his ears must have sounded voices of the past. The voice that of old called the patriarch from his tent to look upon the stars above him, gleaming and glittering in the glory of the Eastern night, and told him that his seed should be as those stars for

multitude—the voice that claimed of old from a tyrant king the deliverance of God's enslaved and oppressed people, saying, "Let my people go that they may serve me"—the voice that in the hour of their direst extremity cleft for them a passage through the waters of the sea which engulfed their enemies—the voice that spoke in thunder from Sinai the law, on their obedience to which was to depend their possession of the promised land—the voice which cheered and guided the people of God through all their desert wanderings—the voice which, speaking through the lips of Judge and Prophet and Righteous King, still promised victory and safety as the reward of righteousness, and warned of destruction as the punishment of sin—a punishment which came as surely as the setting followed the rising sun—these voices from the past must have filled, as with "the sound of a great rushing," the ears of the Prophet, as he, too, in his turn, went forth to speak to God's people of the God of their Fathers—the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob—the God who had never yet forsaken His people who trusted in Him, nor yet failed to punish them when they rebelled against His law and rejected His covenant.

And so must it ever be with the Church in all the difficulties or discouragements or dangers of the present. She may still hear, and take courage as she hears, the voices of the past. The voices that Ezekiel and his brethren of the Prophets heard, she hears too. The long, long story of Divine faithfulness and power and love, bearing with, over-ruling, helping still the unbelief, the weakness of men. But how those voices of the past have swelled and deepened since—what a mighty sound of a great rushing is in our ears—as to the story of the Israel of old we add the story of the new Israel of God—the people whom He has granted as the inheritance of His

Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Voices from Bethlehem and Calvary, and the Garden of the opened Tomb; the voice which sent the Church on her mission—"Go ye into all the world;" the voice which promised her the continued presence of her Lord—"I am with you even to the end of the world;" the voices of the multitude at Pentecost, when in many tongues the representatives of every nation under heaven sang the prophetic triumph-song of the Church; the voices of prophets, apostles, evangelists, telling out among the heathen that the Lord is King! In the creeds that sum up and express the eternal verities of the Faith; in liturgies that breathe the hopes and aspirations of believing, suffering, sorrowing, yet trusting souls; in psalms and songs of exultation that tell us of victory over the world achieved beneath the banner of the Cross; in lives of saints, in death-songs of martyrs, comes still, age after age, year after year, hour after hour, deepening its voice with the deepening of the night, from one and all the great lesson of the past—the lesson of endurance in the present, and hope for the future. It is the voice which tells us how, through all the successive ages of her history, spite of difficulty, of danger—spite of the rage of her enemies, the faults and the errors and the sins of her own children—spite of assaults of unbelief and errors of heresy—spite of sinful schism and sad internal strife—spite of waxing sin and waning love—spite of all that from time to time has hindered her work, has even seemed to threaten her existence, the Church of Christ has lived on till now; lived by the power of a Life which is not hers—lived by the might of a present Christ and indwelling Spirit—lived to say, as surely *we* say this day—not boastfully, but humbly, for the sustaining power is not ours; penitently, for we know how unworthy we are of that presence; tremblingly

even, for we know how awful the responsibility which that presence entails; but still hopefully, still believingly, still resolutely,—“Surely the Lord is with us still; surely when we pass through the waters He will be with us; surely though the water floods rise high they shall not overwhelm us; surely if we seek it we shall have, as those who have gone before us have had, help from the sanctuary, strength for the day’s toil, though it be weary; patience for the day’s trial, though it be sharp; deliverance from the day’s danger, though it be threatening—surely we, too, shall have cause to say, in our turn, ‘Blessed be the glory of the Lord from His place,’ from the dwelling-place He has chosen, from the Church of His love, His temple here on earth!”

But while we listen, and rejoice to listen, to the voices of the great past of the Catholic Church, there is surely one voice, one note in that great rushing sound, which should ring clear and loud—it is the voice of our own English past—it is the witness of our own English Church to the presence and the glory of her Lord. In our ears to-day, as we gather together in this noble temple, on the site where for twelve centuries English Christianity has had a home and a sanctuary, there sound voices of the past—of a far distant past—which yet lives and moves and has its being in the present, moulding, shaping, impelling onwards the life and the work of the Church of our own day.

Let us listen to some of these voices, and learn to interpret and apply their message to us now.

We worship to-day on the site of a mission chapel. It was a mission—a Church mission—which twelve hundred years ago gathered here to plant the standard of the Cross. The church they built, whose foundations lie beneath our own, was the home—the Medehampstead—“the home in

the meadows" of a band of Christian missionaries to what was then English heathendom. The Christianity of their day was an aggressive Christianity. It was a Christianity which owned and acted on the great law of the Master, that it should multiply and replenish the earth that He had redeemed, and subdue it for Him—a Christianity which went forth, in His honour, conquering and to conquer, because it believed intensely, entirely, in its mission; because it could not rest while there remained within its reach souls that knew not His name and owned not His law. The Christianity of that day came to a pagan England from afar, because Christians who dwelt afar off claimed the heathen for their Lord's heritage, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession.

And the record of their mission work, the manner and the method of it, was this—that they brought with them the Church in its integrity and entirety. They placed, in the centre of the territory they had marked out for their conquest, the seat—the cathedral—of the bishop, who was to lead a band of missionaries to their work for Christ. From this centre—this home of Christian faith and life—from this cathedral they sent out the missionary priest, here and there as a door was opened, who was to be sustained by the offerings of the faithful, from this place, until at last and by degrees the missionary became a pastor, and the parish grew out of the diocese. In a word, they made the diocese the unit of their Church life—the cathedral the core and heart of their great mission work, from which encouragement, guidance, and sustenance should flow out to the early missionary in his distant post of labour. The diocese had not only its head—the bishop—its hands, the clergy; it had *its heart*—the cathedral, from which life-blood flowed through all its members. Yes, the voice which speaks to us from this

place is the voice of the missionary, the voice which proclaims the ideal of Christ's Church, that it must be aggressive, that it must go forth in the Master's name to wage war against all forms of evil and unbelief. For the call of Christ to His mission work is as imperative and as clear now as ever, not merely to mission work among the far-off heathen, but the heathen at home; not merely to the savage of barbarism, but the savage of civilization. There are parts of England—alas, that it should be so!—where the name of Christ is unknown, and the name of God serves only to point an oath or a blasphemy—parts where Christianity is not yet in possession. There are others—too many—where the stagnant, careless life needs to be stirred by the breath of special missions. There are evils to be contended with, sins to be denounced, sufferings to be redressed, wrongs to be obliterated, which call for the missionary spirit of the Church.

But it was not only missionary work—it was united, associated, organised work, which germinated and grew and spread forth from this home in the meadows. In those days the Church accepted, wisely accepted, the help and the service of men who were willing to live together in a common home, devoting their lives to a common purpose, consecrating that life by daily prayer. Men were not in those days afraid of the name of brotherhoods, or of vows, life-long or otherwise, which bound men together for the service of God and man. It was a brotherhood—a noble and devoted brotherhood, that reared this noble shrine to the honour and glory of God, and built, all clustered round it, homes for those who would live for Him. It was here that this brotherhood offered to God their daily worship, proclaiming to all men that prayer is labour; telling us that religion and life for God is not altogether preaching and platform

speaking, nor benevolent and social effort, nor the advocacy of this or that religious cause; but that there is place in it, and that place should be found in the Church of Christ, for meditation and prayer, for theological study and learning, and the quiet and deeper life, which does not cry aloud nor utter its voice in the streets, but which may nevertheless deeply influence and guide and sway that outer and busier life that noisily sweeps and surges round it.

And yet it was this very brotherhood which taught all men that to subdue the earth, to labour with honest and skilful hands for daily bread, was work for God too. As they reclaimed the fen and drained the meadow and tilled the field, as they cultivated the arts of music and sculpture and painting, as they cherished literature, as they taught the ignorant, as they succoured and relieved the poor, as in the moral and material wilderness around them they made them gardens of peace and culture that blossomed as the rose—they taught men that Christianity has its practical as well as its meditative and ascetic side, and that godliness is profitable for this life as well as that which is to come!

Truly he is but an ignorant and a shallow student of the history of his nation or his Church who, standing among the ruins of the monasteries, has no word for them but a sneer at monks and friars, and a pharisaic comparison of their life with his own of enlightened selfishness and busy acquisition of wealth.

Yes! the voice of the past tells us of the need of united, of organised work, though the form of the organisation may vary with the times and the seasons.

But there is yet another voice from the past that is speaking loudly in our ears this day. It is a voice, not of encouragement, but of warning—of gravest, sternest

warning. Take but a step from out this nobly-restored cathedral, and you stand amongst ruins. The fragments—the decayed and defaced fragments of the great monastery are all around you, and no man dreams of restoring them. Not only they, but that for which they existed—the great brotherhood that once made them its dwelling—has perished. The religious orders, once so powerful, have vanished, and their place knows them no more. How came this to pass? How was it that institutions which once filled so large a space, and played so noble a part in the history of our Church, have vanished so completely away, that even these decaying fragments of their homes have survived them? For this reason, that they had themselves survived their own ideal. Because the true life that had once animated them—the life of service, of self-sacrifice—had all but died out, and in its place had come the spirit of self-indulgence, and ease, and sloth; because the ever-accumulating wealth which the piety or the superstitious fears of men had endowed them with, had corrupted, had all but destroyed the nobler, simpler purposes of their earlier and better days; because that for them had come—as for every unjust steward must, sooner or later, come—the summons, “Give an account of thy stewardship, thou shalt be no longer steward.” Cruel, unjust, rapacious were the hands that executed this judgment. Wickedly wasteful and sacrilegious were the uses to which most of the plundered wealth of the monasteries was put. Cruel and impious as the heathen that laid waste Jerusalem and swept away the treasures of her sanctuary were the spoilers of the monasteries; yet, like them, they were but the instruments of that Divine judgment which begins now, as of old, with the house of God. The wealth that the religious orders misused was plundered; the opportunities

and powers for good that they possessed were transferred to other hands. The word had gone forth against them : "Take away their battlements, for they are not the Lord's !"

And is not this a lesson from the past which we, in the present, would do well to lay to heart?—a lesson which teaches us that endowments, and rank, and privileges, rightly understood, are only other words for duties and opportunities ; and that these are all but talents lent us to put out to usury, by the Lord, who will surely come again and yet again to ask from us how we have traded with them ; and that if He should find us slothful servants, faithless stewards, He will find amongst our enemies round about the instruments of our punishment. Surely if there be a voice from the past that sounds more loudly, clearly than another ; if there be a voice that should ring in our ears, re-echoed from ruined cloister, and shattered arch, and mouldering column, it is this : "From him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he seemeth to have."

Yet another voice swells the rushing sound of the past to-day.

This hour of desolation and of waste was not the darkest hour of the Church in this place. No, not even when the darkness deepened into what seemed, for the moment, utter ruin and destruction ; when the worship that for ages had hallowed this house of God was silenced ; when it became a crime to minister, within these walls, her sacraments or utter her prayers ; when rude hands made havoc of her sanctuary ; when this house of prayer was turned into a factory, and its sister fanes, throughout the realm, made to stable cattle, and put even to viler and nameless uses,—not then was the Church at her lowest ; not then had her enemies triumphed

over her ! These were but sudden, violent, and yet passing plunderings and desolations, as were the successful invasions of the kings of the heathen round about Jerusalem in the days that preceded the Captivity. From these she might and did recover, and that speedily. But there came an hour when the Church did indeed enter into a worse than Babylonish captivity. It was when, worn by the fierce political and religious strife of two centuries ; enfeebled by the loss, in an unhappy schism, of some of the saintliest of her children, she slept the dull, heavy slumber of exhaustion :—when worldliness and sloth had taken possession of her ; when she had almost become a mere establishment, and had all but ceased to be a Church ; days of a servile hierarchy, dumb pastors, and alienated and godless laity ; days of unrebuked sin and evil, of gross abuses cherished unreprieved ; days which we read the record of with feelings of shame and amazement—shame that such things should have been ; amazement that the Church should have survived them !

In that darkest, saddest, dreariest hour of her life, did it please God to send to her prophets who had seen “visions of God,” and who came in His name to speak His words in the ears of a careless world and a slumbering Church. Then it was that the great evangelical revival spread throughout the land. Their hearts filled with the prophets’ shame and sorrow for the sin and ungodliness and the evangelist’s loving zeal for the souls of men, these true prophets went everywhere preaching the Word—preaching a living Saviour with words from lips that had been touched with fire from the altar. They taught again the great evangelical verities of conversion, repentance, faith, and love of God and love for man, and as they preached the old truths with new zeal and new

life, the people heard them gladly, and a breath from Heaven filled the dry bones of dull and decent and slumbering orthodoxy, and our Church revived and stood upon her feet, and began to stretch forth her hands once more to her Master's work, and to till and to dress the long-neglected weed-grown vineyard that He had given her to keep.

And when this revival—restoring as it did the great, the essential idea of the union between the individual soul and its Saviour, and the converting, sanctifying work of the Spirit—had done its work, then yet another restoration was vouchsafed her of forgotten truths. Then there rose up men whose souls were filled with the thought that Christ had come to found on earth a visible society—that as there was a life of individual souls with Him and He in them, so was there a corporate life of the Church with Him and He in her. Then the idea of His sacramental life of the Church, and all that flows from and out of it, revealed itself once more to men. Men began to stand upon the ancient ways, and seek for the old paths; and sought to make their Church—as their predecessors had sought to make the individual soul—a living temple, blessed with the manifested glory of the Lord! This idea, too, like all great and true ones, found its outward and visible expression. Restored churches, bright and beautiful services, frequent sacraments, devout confirmations replaced the neglected and half-ruined edifices, the dreary and often mutilated worship, the cold, bare, perfunctory rites of the past. The Church had awoke, and had put on once more her garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; and again men had come to understand, as they witnessed this revival, spite its excesses, spite its extravagances—when was there ever zeal and enthusiasm without extravagances?—that they were witnessing a real

outpouring of the Spirit of God, a Pentecostal revival of His Church, and they blessed the glory of the Lord from His place.

In this revival, in this restoration, the cathedrals of our Church have had their share. Beginning first, as we have seen, with individual souls, and spreading onwards to their parochial life, to the parish and the church—rising still upward—it reaches at last our cathedrals; and there, too, surely it has made its mark. We see it not only in such restorations as we see here to-day, not only in the sweeping away of vulgar excrescences that disfigured them, or hideous erections that concealed their exquisite proportions, and made them as ugly as it was possible for things so intensely beautiful to be; the restored cathedral has been put once more to its true uses. It has opened its doors to the people, it has filled its sanctuary with stately services, and its great nave with crowds who listen to the voices of the great preachers of our day. Alas! that the voice of the greatest of them should be no longer heard amongst us.* No longer do men ask, with contemptuous curiosity—What is the use of cathedrals? No longer do they see a great building—with its vast capacities for worship and for teaching—turned into the private chapel of the Precincts, where, snugly ensconced in a dusty citadel of pewdom, a few highly privileged ecclesiastics discharged the double function of ministers and congregation; performing services in which there were few to share, and preaching learned sermons which only lacked hearers to be edifying. And yet another restoration seems even now to be approaching,—a moral restoration, too, in the regaining of the thought that a cathedral is not a building simply, but an institution; a part—and a most important part—of the

* This reference is to the death of Canon Liddon

spiritual life of the internal administration of the Church; that Dean and Chapter and Canons, are not merely officers of a cathedral, but of a diocese; that they should be—may be, if old ideas are carried out—the council of the Bishop, the teachers of the people, the helpers of the parish priest—the centre and core of diocesan life and work. Much, very much has yet to be done, ere this ideal be realised. Yet it is the ideal which is before men's minds, the ideal towards which we may work, the end for which we may strive and pray!

Thus, brethren, we see some of those lessons from the past, those sermons in stones, which your cathedral is preaching to you this day. It tells us that our Christianity, our Christian life and work, must still be an aggressive, a united, a reformed and ever self-reforming, a restored and ever self-restoring Christianity: not resting in indolence, not working in isolation; not clinging obstinately to the past and refusing the change that the present needs; and yet not recklessly and hastily adopting every novelty, that has in its favour the cry of the hour: bringing forth, rather, things old and new; old truths in new aspects, old principles with new applications, old ideas with new methods; strong and yet flexible; firm and yet elastic; adapting herself ever to the varying needs, never to the varying wishes and fancies of the age in which she lives: reforming with unsparing hand, whatever of old defect or new fault she may discern: restoring still, with wise and loving hand, all that is good in the past—not by servile and misplaced imitation, but by wise and skilful adaptation: in all her efforts, in all her work and labour, still filled with one aim and one only, the glory of her Master and her Lord.

If He of His great mercy should grant us thus to labour and to live for Him, we too, in our day and generation,

shall have done something for His honour, something too for which those who succeed us may bear us in kindly remembrance. Much they will doubtless see of error and of failure. They will learn from our mistakes, and profit by our faults. Still they may see—nay, let us resolve that they shall see—in our lives, in our work that which shall help and encourage them in theirs. Still may our voices be allowed to mingle with the ever-deepening rushing voices of the past, as we too say, with those who are gone before us, to those who come after us, “Blessed be the glory of the Lord from His place, now and for evermore.”

THE CHRISTIAN IDEAL OF HUMAN LIFE.

THE CHRISTIAN IDEAL OF HUMAN LIFE.

“Forgetting those things which are behind and reaching unto those things which are before.”—*PHILIPPIANS* iii. 13.

FORGETTING the past! Who can forget it if he would? Does it not live in the present? Does it not shape and foreshadow, and, alas! too often, overshadow, all our future? Does it not haunt, and follow, and waylay us—starting up before us unbidden, undesired often—loved or hated, lovely or odious, sad or joyous—but, in whatever shape or aspect, the still living, the undying past?

Forget the past! Who would forget it if he could? Who is there who would purchase forgetfulness of all its pains by forgetfulness of all its delights? Who is there who would raze out all its written troubles from his brain, and “pluck its rooted sorrow” from his heart, if with these he must also raze and root out all that head and heart recall with such sweet and tender affection? Who would forget the loss of the loved one, if with that memory were to vanish the memory of all the interwoven life and love that made that loss so bitter? Who would erase the epitaph, that love comes again and again to deepen and engrave afresh, if with it he must destroy the recollections that win the sorrowing presence of that love? Who is there who would not say that oblivion is too great a price to pay for escape from the very saddest recollec-

tions of the past? They rise before us, not, as we once knew them—dark, terrible, shrouded all in gloom and mystery of sorrow; but with their rugged outlines softened, their deep-lying shadows lost to view “like mountain ranges over-past in memory’s distance fair.” Spare us, oh, spare us still—with all their pains, with all their sorrows—the bitter-sweet memories of the past! We would not lose them if we could. Thank God, thank our loving and merciful Father, that He has so ordered it for us that we cannot lose them if we would.

And yet the Apostle tells us that he aimed at forgetting them, or, rather, that he so ordered his life that he could not help forgetting them. He was, he tells us, like the racer who, in his swift race, sends before him the glance that discerns—the hands that reach out before his flying feet—in his eagerness to reach the mark of the prize of his high calling. And he sets himself, in this respect, as our example; he exhorts us in like manner—“forgetting those things that are behind to reach out unto those things that are before.”

What does this mean? Not, certainly, a literal forgetfulness; that, we have seen, is neither possible nor desirable; but a comparative forgetfulness—such disregard of the past as is caused by the intensity of the desire and effort for something in the future; that urges us onwards and onwards, as though the past, as though the present, were not; outweighing, in its attractiveness, alike the memories of the past and the cares of the present, so that we see these as those who see them not, and know them as those who know them not, in the eagerness with which we press forwards and onwards to the prize that is to crown the winner!

Such is the ideal of the Christian life as set before us by one whose race was well-nigh run; by one whose eventful

past must have been full of wonderful memories, and whose present must have been crowded with overwhelming duties and anxieties, but for whom the wondrous past, the anxious present, were as things that were not and had never been, in the view of that future which he was yet to attain unto.

Such an ideal has in it an element that distinguishes it from all other ideals that men form to themselves of human life. It is that element of proportion, which is a known essential to all perfection of design. No picture, however vivid its colouring, however exquisite its beauty of detail, can ever be perfect, if it lacks this condition of due and harmonious relation between all its parts. Without this, it lacks the one thing essential to perfect art, and that is truthfulness. It may be vivid, striking, fascinating even, but it is untrue.

Now—as we claim for the Christian ideal of life that it is the truest, noblest form in which life can exist—let us test the truth of this ideal by comparing it with some of those that men frame for themselves who have no thought of, and no care for, that mark of the prize of the high calling which Christianity sets before us, and let us see how, in this matter of true and perfect proportion, it compares with these.

And—taking these in the order of time—there is, first, the Youth's ideal of life. In that, the past can have but little share. Life for the young lies mainly in the future; the golden glory of its sunrise shines all before him, no shadows of the past yet cast upon his path. He "reaches forward" in eager anticipation of the prizes that, he firmly believes, life has in store for him. Wealth, fame, pleasure, happiness, all beckon him onwards as he sets himself, in the exultant strength of his youth, to run the race in which he promises himself he shall full surely prove a winner.

And those who are older—those who have tried for these prizes and failed, or who have won them and found how unsatisfying they are at the best—look on, and smile sadly at illusions that once deceived and hopes that have failed them. They know, as he will yet know, what the present has to teach us of the vanity of human wishes and the folly of human expectations. They know how these dreams of the morning vanish like mists in the heat of the weary day ;

“ How the vision of dawn is leisure,
But the truth of day is toil,
And we wake from dreams of pleasure,
To face the world's turmoil.”

They can tell the young man that his ideal of life is false, because it is so largely coloured by the hues of a future which exists but in his imagination, and that the time will come for him, as it has for them, when memory will tone down all these high colours of hope, and when care and sorrow and disappointment shall claim him as their pupil, and teach him the old, old lesson, which every child of Adam has to learn sooner or later—“ Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.”

And then there is the Man's ideal of life, and that is mainly of the present. The cares, the anxieties, the toils, the ambitions, the hard realities of this every-day working world ring him round so closely that he neither looks far back nor far before him. He is too busy to indulge in memories of the pleasant past, or in day dreams of an imaginary future. Sufficient for each day, as it comes, are its daily tasks and daily trials, and he must be a whole man for these. Sentiment, whether of memory or of imagination, is all very well for the old, who must live in the past, or the young, who may live in the future. He must live and work and suffer in the real, earnest,

toilsome present. When he was young, he had his imagination ; when he shall be old, he will have his recollections ; but now he has his work and he must give himself all to that, and yet, even as he does so, he feels how small, how hard, how dull an ideal of life is this, bounded all as it is within the narrow horizon of to-day. He feels how heart and soul grow dwarfed and starved in the dull unromantic work of daily bread-winning.

He thinks sadly, when he has time to think at all, of youth's light-hearted hopefulness, or of the quiet restfulness and peace of old age, and then he sets himself, with a sigh, to tug again the weary oar to which he is chained. Forgetting in his weariness the things that are behind, and having little heart to picture to himself a future that may never come, he toils on against the stream which is still, spite of his efforts, bearing him on whither he knows not. Such is not a cheerful picture of life, and yet it is life as thousands of weary workers know it, who have no mark of a high calling, no sense of vocation to ennoble their merely animal existence. Clearly such an ideal lacks proportion, the present usurps it nearly all ; it wants alike the brightness of youth and the calmness of old age. It is untrue, because in it neither past nor future has its proper place.

And then, there is the Old Man's view of life. For him the past predominates over both the present and the future. The visions of youth have long vanished, the struggles of manhood are over, his place in this world, for good or evil, is fixed beyond his power to change it ; his future here, at its longest, can be but a little span, and his hopes, his interests, his ambitions, if he have any left, are sinking within that narrow limit. Naturally his thoughts turn backwards to the past ; his treasures lie there, and his heart is with them ; he dwells amongst the

scenes of his youth, with friends whose voices, long hushed and still, are still living voices for him. He lives over again the joys and the sorrows, the failures or the triumphs of his riper years. The stir, the bustle, the fever-strife of life all round him have almost ceased to interest and only fatigue him; more and more the quiet restfulness of the past attracts him from the cares of the present and the anxieties for the future, that distract and harass younger men. The world may be going ill or well—if ill, it will not be for a very long time that he will suffer from it, and he cannot make it any better—if well, those who come after him will enjoy it: but for him it matters little how things go. The days have come for him in which he “has no pleasure.” All he asks from the present is to be left alone with the past, of which he is so soon to become a part.

And so the Old Man, if he be uncheered by hope beyond the grave which he is approaching, moves towards it with averted eyes, turned backward ever to the youth that revives not, to the manhood that comes not again; to lost loves and vanished joys, that are now nearly all that link him to the life he wearies of, yet dreads to quit.

Such is life, as seen by those runners in life's race, before whom hangs no mark of the prize of a higher calling, that attracts the gaze and quickens the eager feet of him who sees the crown laid up for him in Christ, and, seeing it, reaches forward still to claim and grasp it.

Blot from the eyes of faith this goal of life's race, and what is it all but a race upon a stage, aimless, unreal, its racers actors all, who fret and pant their little hour to win, if they do win, crowns which are but tinsel at the best?

How truly has it all been summed up in the words of

one whose feet, in our day, were among the foremost in life's race, and whose outstretched hands were filled, at last, with prizes beyond the dreams of even his ambitious youth, and who tells us, as he reviews it all, that "Youth is an illusion; manhood a struggle; old age a regret!"

And now let us view this race of life from the Christian stand-point. Let us look on it in the light of that crown, glorious and unfading, that is set before him who so runs that he may obtain. So viewed, life is seen in its true proportions; its successive parts fall each into their true place and right relation to the rest. Its aim is the Eternal Life, beyond the changes and chances of this mortal existence; "life at God's right hand, and pleasures for evermore"—a crown of life, not indeed to be won without a struggle, and yet that shall reward the toiler as no earthly crown can ever do.

Past, present, future, from such a view, take each their true and proper place. Its future, more glorious than ever rose before the eyes of the Youth, corrects and subdues his vision of life, subordinating it all to its infinitely greater, nobler promises. It tells him that those dreams of life's morning, in which he is delighting, are but the unconscious aspirations of the soul after that life which alone can realise its longing. It tells him that the glowing colours in which he paints his future—too sure, alas, to fade into the light of common day—are but the pale, far-off reflection in the mirror of the soul of the glories of its true heritage: "for eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered the heart of man the things that God hath prepared for them that love Him." It bids him aspire, but with a higher aspiration; hope, but with a more glorious hope; aim, but with a nobler ambition than ever filled his heart and soul with those earth-born

hopes, aspirations, ambitions, that time may ultimately blight, and that, in any case, death must bring to naught.

Again, for the Man of middle life, it has a word that frees him from the tyranny of the present with all its dull monotony of toil. It tells him that "this daily round, this trivial task, may yield him all he needs to ask, room to deny himself, a road to bring him daily nearer God." It tells him that in a life lived all for God, there can be nothing trivial or contemptible, for in all that life God lives; that its every duty, even the smallest, rightly performed, is fitting him for the enjoyment of the rest that remaineth for the people of God; that its every thought rightly thought, its every deed rightly done, is the weaving of another thread in the wedding garment he shall wear at the great feast, where he shall sit down together with his Lord. And so it gives to life, even the poorest, meanest, weariest, an interest, a dignity, a beauty all its own. It sheds over all the common ways of life a light that is not of this world, a "light that never was on sea or land," a light in which life, transformed, wears already the hues, exceeding glorious, that it shall wear in the world where there shall be no shadow of darkness, for the nations that dwell there "walk in the light of the Lamb."

For the Old Man—for him whose race is all but run—it shows near, all but within his grasp, the crown for which he has striven. A few more steps, feeble though they be, and his outstretched hands shall touch the goal. And if, at times, the past should win, as it surely will, the old man's backward glance—if, spite of the nearness and the blessedness of the life that is to come, he turns, as he will full oft, a longing, lingering look behind—yet shall that past speak to him of the joys his future has in store. For all along it, as he looks, he can discern how through-

out it all there went with him the guiding, helping, saving presence of his Lord; how, at this or that critical moment in his life, his steps were guided in the way that he knew not; how, when "his treadings had well-nigh gone and his footsteps well-nigh slipped," he was upheld in the path of righteousness; how, when he had fallen grievously, he was raised again; how, again and yet again, the dark waters that seemed to bar his path were cleft before him; how, through mists of error, and beneath clouds of doubt and fear, an unseen hand still "led him on"; and as he retraces the long wilderness journey of the past—as, at every step, at every turn, he sees fresh proof of the unfailing love, the unerring wisdom that has guided all his ways—he gathers from that past its lesson of assured faith and hope for the future. The Valley of the Shadow that he is nearing affrights him not. Light from the past shines through it and beyond it, and "angel faces smile that he has loved and lost awhile." The Lord, whom he has followed, stands on the far-off shore and beckons him, and he knows Him for the Lord who, all his life long, has blessed him with His loving presence. And so—forgetting in the blessedness of that vision the things that are behind—forgetting the sorrows, the sins, the trials, the failures, the disappointments, the weariness of way by which he has come, he "reaches forward to the things that are before," even to the joy of his Lord into which he is about to enter.

So past, present, and future find their true place and true relation in the Christian ideal of human life, the past with its memories, the present with its duties, the future with its hopes, all working together for good for those who, setting aside "every weight, and every sin that doth so easily beset them, run with patience the race set before them" by Him who holds for them the prize of that race,

the crown "incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away."

With this thought in our hearts, with this sure and certain hope before our eyes, let us in this dawn of the new year, face without fear, nay, with confident trust and hope, whatever of duty or of trial it may have in store for us. Duty and trial it will surely bring, and sorrow too, perhaps, to us and to those who may be called to sorrow with us, or, it may be, for us! But as its days and months roll on, one thing it, assuredly, will bring to each of us, the nearer presence of our Lord. Let us resolve to realise that presence in all we say and do, or suffer or enjoy; to live for Him now, so that we may live with Him hereafter; to forget, at His bidding, all that in past or present would draw away our hearts from Him; to do our day's work, patiently, manfully, hopefully; and to trust him, absolutely and entirely, with our future. Let this be the aim of our life, the purpose of our hearts in this new year, and in all of life that He may grant us in years to come.

THE LAW OF THE OLD TESTAMENT AND
THE LAW OF THE NEW.

THE LAW OF THE OLD TESTAMENT AND THE LAW OF THE NEW.

PREACHED AT WINDSOR, NOVEMBER 30, 1890 (FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT).

“When He came down from the mountain great multitudes followed Him. And behold there came a leper and worshipped Him, saying, Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean. And Jesus put forth His hand and touched him, saying, I will, be thou clean; and immediately his leprosy was cleansed.”—MATTHEW viii. 1-4.

THE mount from which our Lord descended to work this miracle of healing was the Mount of the Beatitudes. It was the place from which He spoke that great discourse, prefaced by a sevenfold blessing, fraught with blessings to all who hear and keep its sayings, which we call the Sermon on the Mount,—that discourse in which Christ, our Lord and King, proclaims, for us, the *law* of that divine society, that Kingdom of God which He came to establish upon earth.

As the scene of that sermon rises before us, in all its sweet attractiveness; as we picture to ourselves that hill, with its grassy slopes, all bathed in the glory of the eastern sunset, on which were gathered round the Lord the band of His disciples, listening, with lowly reverence, to His words; as we see its lower levels, thick crowded with the multitudes who waited for His coming down to help and to heal them, we are reminded, by contrast, of another mountain and another lawgiving; a mount, all

shrouded in deepest darkness, shot through with gleams of fire; the mount even to approach which was death; the mount on which stood, in solitary, isolated, unseen community with God, the great lawgiver of the Jews, and from which he descended, but not, as Christ, to heal and to bless, but to denounce and to punish, to dash from his hand, in indignation at the sin of the multitudes that greeted his descent, the tables of their law; to send, in judgment of their wickedness, the destroying bands who avenged their apostacy and their sin.

No two scenes can be imagined more unlike, more strangely contrasted, than that of the lawgiving of Mount Sinai and the lawgiving on the Mount of the Sermon—no two advents more strangely dissimilar than the advent of Moses and the advent of Christ.

And yet they are alike in this—that they are both revelations of law, advents of lawgivers; both foundings of a divine society; both, too, fraught with blessings for those who heard and who obeyed the laws there proclaimed, and both, too, fraught with punishment for those who heeded not or who disobeyed those laws. For the society which Moses founded was, assuredly, a blessing, God-given, to the world. It was the training of a nation whose God was to be the Lord, whose laws were laws of righteousness, which might raise, and did raise them, to a level of happiness above all nations upon earth. Not all terror and wrath, and not all cloud and darkness was this coming of the law to God's people of old. This Mount of Sinai—could they but have kept the law that came from it—was for them a Mount of Beatitudes. Moses was, as Christ was, the preacher of a great Sermon of Righteousness, fraught with blessings for those who heard and kept its sayings.

And on the other Mount this sermon, this law of

Christ, had, and has, its sterner, and even its awful side. This *law*, which our Lawgiver proclaims for us, has its sanctions, and its penalties too. If he that hears Christ's words and does them is like to the house on the rock, he that hears them not is like to him who builds upon the sand. If he perished without mercy who disobeyed the law spoken in thunder, how much more surely shall punishment overtake him who disobeys the law given from the Mount of the Beatitudes.

Those words, those helpful, guiding, gracious words of Christ are, as He tells us, testing and accusing words—words which, He tells us, shall judge us in the last day—judge us all the more searchingly because of their very graciousness and helpfulness, if we are not won by their graciousness, and if we care not for their helpfulness.

If the law, then, had its hidden blessings, unseen in the gloom, unheard in the thunders of its first revealings, so, on the other hand, has the Gospel its terrors, unseen in the brightness, unheard in the low, sweet breathing of its first utterances, but there, all the same, as truly as were the lightnings and the thunderings.

What is it, then, that constitutes the real difference between these two scenes—these two advents—apparently so unlike in all their surroundings, and yet, apparently, so identical in all their inner and essential significance? Why should one lawgiver be surrounded by all that is terrible and awe-inspiring, the other by all that is gracious and attractive?

Now, in the first place, the reason certainly is not that Christ has proclaimed to us an easier law than that of Moses. On the contrary, His laws are far harder of fulfilment, setting before us, as they do, a far higher ideal of life; reaching, as they do, far deeper into our very innermost hearts and consciences than ever did the older

law. No one can read, with any attention, the laws of the Sermon on the Mount, far-reaching, profoundly spiritual, all-embracing as they are, exacting from us self-denials, self-sacrifices, such as the old law did not so much as hint at, without being tempted to say, of one after another, "This is a hard saying, who can bear it? who can obey it? who can rise to such heights of love to God and man as are set before us?"

Nor, again, is the graciousness and the winsomeness of this advent of Christ and Christ's law to be attributed to the fact that He comes to promise forgiveness for the sin of transgressing it—that His revelation is all of pardon and of peace. For, not to say what we have already seen, that His revelation is not altogether of forgiveness, that it has its element of punishment and of warning, we may see, further, that if it had been a revelation of forgiveness simply and entirely, it had not been a blessing but rather a hurt, and a mischief amongst men. For, surely, the revelation that there was henceforth to be no penalty for sin—that no transgression of any law should ever after meet with just recompense of punishment, but all be to all men always and freely forgiven—would be the establishment not of a society of righteousness but of unrighteousness—a society which would really be without law, for laws without the sanction of penalties attached are, in fact, no laws. A kingdom without law is not a kingdom, it is a chaos—a chaos, too, of evil, unchecked and unrestrained, and, therefore, of misery. Universal and unlimited forgiveness for every offence would, therefore, be no blessing; would assuredly be as great a curse in the divine as it would be in any earthly kingdom.

If, therefore, the new law of Christ did not differ from the older law of Moses in that it was easier of fulfilment, or that it was laxer as regards the penalties for its trans-

gression ; if it be, as it assuredly is, both a harder and a higher law than that of the old covenant, why should the one be pictured to us as a law of misery and terror, and the other of blessing and of attractiveness ? Why, of the two lawgivers, should Christ be so winning, Moses so terrible ?

We shall understand this if we turn our attention to the laws of another kingdom, which, equally with those of Moses and of Christ, are divine. This world in which we live, this kingdom of Nature that is all around us and with us, is *God's* kingdom. He has created it ; He rules it, and He *rules it by law* ! In the whole realm of Nature there is no lawlessness. Every particle of matter, every force that dwells in it, exists, moves, acts by law, not written but real, unchanging, universal, never-ceasing law. From the circling of the mightiest planet round the sun to the dancing of the motes in the sunbeam ; from the sweep and the roar of the whirlwind to the softest breath of the summer breeze ; from the rising tide of the great ocean to the trickling of raindrops over one another along the pane ; everything that moves and lives, everything that exists and is, is simply the product, the creature, the slave of law.

To discover, to know these laws is the province of science, and science is every day revealing to us, more and more clearly, how uniform, how changeless, how certain—yes, and one thing more—it tells us *how pitiless they are* ! They will not turn aside at our bidding ; they will not change, by a hair's breadth, their course for our entreaties ; they bring us now joy, now sorrow, now pleasure, now pain. But joy or sorrow, pleasure or pain, comes to us with a strange, terrible indifference. These great revolving wheels of the forces that move the universe will not stand still because some poor suffering mortal has been caught in their jagged teeth. The laws

of the natural world ; the forces of the universe ; the laws of health that rule our bodies ; the social laws that rule the society ; the moral law that rules humanity—not one of these can be braved or broken with impunity. Like the spoken laws of Moses or of Christ's Sermon, these are, indeed, full of blessings for us, if we understand, if we heed them. Like them, too, they are fraught with punishment for those who understand or heed them not.

But there is this difference between these great laws of the natural kingdom and the law of righteousness in the Kingdom of Christ—that when we understand the former we *can* obey them as we cannot obey the latter. When we know that the fire which warms may also burn, we shun the burning and we use the warmth. When we know that lightning kills, and yet that the lightning, rightly used, is our servant, we protect ourselves from the lightning—we use it to light up our cities, to flash our messages round the earth. We know that the nature of some plant is poisonous and yet we employ it. We study, that is to say, the laws of Nature ; we obey, and, in obeying, find our health and our happiness.

But this is just what we do not, and cannot do as regards the law of righteousness. We may study it. It is not, like the laws of Nature, hard of comprehension. Everyone can understand to do justice ; to live honestly ; to walk humbly with God ; to love the Lord our God and our neighbour as ourselves ; to do unto all men as we would they should do unto us ! Who is there who does not understand these ? The little child and the wisest and greatest of philosophers see these laws with equal clearness. We feel them in our hearts to be true and just ; our conscience tells us these laws are divine, are universal, are binding upon all. We know them, we admire them ; but can we obey them, as we obey those other

laws of Nature? Can we always do that which we know that we should do ; can we always leave undone that which we should not do ? Do we not know, everyone of us, that we cannot do this—that we are constantly transgressing these laws ; constantly falling short of the perfect and holy law of God ; that there is a law in our members—a law that is ever bringing us into captivity to sin and death ? Is it not the trial, the sorrow of all who try to obey, to know how often they disobey ? Do we not know by all that we see in the world around us, that what mankind needs is not *knowledge* of what is right, but the *power* to do right when it is known ; *not law*, but the strength to live lawfully ? The world has never been without moral law. Written, not on tables of stone, but on the fleshy tables of the heart, by the finger of God, are the great commandments of His law. But the disease, the misery of humanity is that it can see the right, and yet still, by some subtle warp and strain of its nature, pursue the wrong. The profligate, the vicious, the criminal, the sinful tell us, one and all, “*I know*—I know that I am not what I ought to be. I know that there is a higher, a nobler, a happier life than that I am leading, and yet—and yet I cannot help being what I am, sinful and unhappy.”

Yes, now and ever, round about those high places—these moral elevations—where moralists, and philosophers, and preachers, and law-givers set forth high ideals of life, gather still the suffering and sinning multitudes—the morally lame and halt and paralysed, the outcast leper, foul with the terrible disfigurements of sin ; nay, the possessed one, filled with evil strength that is not his, and raging against all that would restrain him from destroying himself and those around him. For these law is no blessing—is no help ; it seems only to reveal to them how deep is

their fall; how broken and shattered their whole moral nature has been by that fall. It shines on their sin and degradation, as the ray of sunshine might fall into some deep mine where some miserable wretch lies perishing, but it brings for him no deliverance. It lights up, with a terrible clearness, the sores of Lazarus, but it brings him no healing. What the world needs, what it has ever needed, is *not law, but life*—not power to see the right, but power to do it—not knowledge of a moral law, but grace and power faithfully to fulfil the same!

And this it was that Christ came to give us. He came into this world, not merely to give us a higher law—not merely to set us a perfect example of obedience to that law. Neither of these things would have helped, still less have saved a world, which had, already, higher laws than it could obey—a nobler example than it could follow. He came, He Himself tells us, to give us—not so much a new law as a *new life*. I am come, He tells us, in words that speak to all time the reason of His coming, I am come that ye may have *life*, and that ye may have it more *abundantly*. He came that, taking to Himself our nature, filling it with the purity and the might of His Divinity, He might be the Creator of a new humanity, which should have—what it had lost by its fall—the power to obey, from the heart, the new law that He revealed. He came not merely to give Himself *for* us, but to give Himself *to us*; to dwell in the hearts, to live in the lives of those who should receive Him, and so to become, to us, as the second Adam—a quickening Spirit—filling our whole being, mind, and heart, with His own, so that we should become partakers of the Divine Nature.

This it is that makes the essential difference between the coming of Christ and of Christ's law, and the coming and the law-giving of all other lawgivers.

This it is that makes His Sermon, His word of rule and guidance, full of infinite blessing, and the Mount on which it was uttered, a Mount of Beatitudes.

It is that, unlike all other teachers of righteousness, He does not merely take His stand on some lofty moral elevation, and proclaim a high standard of life to the multitudes below—that was no new thing in the world's history—but the new fact, the blessed fact was this: that He alone of all teachers came down from that high place to mingle with the suffering multitude, that never could have ascended up to Him, to heal their deadly disease of sin that had made it, hitherto, impossible for them to obey even lower and laxer laws of life than His; to cast out the spirits of evil, that possess, and distort, and rend our poor humanity; to say to these evil things, Depart; to say to their victims, Rise up—be strong—live the lives of those who, no longer filled with evil spirits, are filled and indwelt by the Spirit of God; to touch with healing, cleansing hand the fever-stricken, the blind, the paralysed, nay, the leprous outcast from whom all others shrink with aversion and fear; to say, I will; be thou clean—be thou strong—be thou, in thy new purity, thy new strength for good and for God, a new creature in me! Well might the scene of such a law-giving be all bright with a glory and a beauty and a graciousness all its own! Well might words of blessing prepare its utterances—seeing that words of help and of healing were to mark its close! Well might the coming of such a lawgiver be proclaimed with songs of angels, and received on earth as glad tidings of great joy, because, on the day on which He was born, there appeared, not merely a prophet, not merely a preacher of righteousness, but a healer and helper—a Saviour—which is Christ the Lord.

And, when we thus contemplate the advent of Christ, we see that there are, for us, more than one—there are in truth many advents—many comings of Christ—even as many as there are sick and suffering souls to whom He comes and reaches out hands that heal and help. Not only once, and long ago, did Christ come amongst men, but ever since then, and all along the history of men have there been comings of Christ. “Behold,” He says, “I stand at the door and knock, and if any man open unto me I enter in and dwell there.”

Yes, to each—to all of us—our Saviour comes; now entreating entrance to hearts too coldly closed, too slowly opening to His knock; now speaking to us His word of loving invitation, “Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest;” now His word of solemn, heart-searching command, “Take up thy cross and follow me!” now some great word of mission, saying, “Go work in my vineyard;” now placing to our lips the cup of sorrow that He drained, and bidding us be baptised with the baptism of suffering which He was baptised with—coming, often unsought, unlooked for; coming ever at our cry for help; but still, the same Christ, preacher of righteousness, prophet of law, giver of life, and yet, let us never forget, coming, too, as *judge*. For each one of these His comings tests and tries, and, therefore, judges those to whom He comes. If, when He knocks at the door of the heart, it remains still closed; if, when He calls, we refuse His invitation; if, when He bids us take the Cross, we shun it; if, when He tenders the cup, we put it from us,—then, for these rejections, for these refusals, shall we one day be judged, and judged for this—that we would not allow Him, who shall judge us then, to save us now. Surely, justly sentenced by the word “Depart from me” shall they be who

through all their lives refused to hear the words, "Come unto me."

And while we, thankfully and reverently, look upon Him who is at once our Lawgiver and our Lifegiver, and own Him in both aspects as our only Saviour, may we not—ought we not to learn from this scene the great secret of all work for Him? Even this, that it is not enough that His disciples should preach to men—nay, not enough that we should set them the example of doing what we preach, and being what we tell them they should be, but that we should do as He did—come down to them—move to and fro amongst them, touch with healing and with helping hands even the most helpless, even the most loathsome of outcasts, never doubting but that, as we do so, He is with us, His words of loving invitation speaking through our lips, His hands strengthening ours, His divine and gracious power working in, and with, and through us, as, in His name, we strive, each in our appointed place, to seek and save that which is lost.

God grant to us, each and all, many such *advents of our Lord*; advents which bring within our hearts and into our lives, and thence to the hearts and lives of others, the loving, helping Christ, the teacher, example, Saviour of Mankind.

“GIVE AN ACCOUNT OF THY STEWARDSHIP.”

“GIVE AN ACCOUNT OF THY STEWARDSHIP.”*

PREACHED IN PETERBOROUGH CATHEDRAL, MARCH 8, 1891.

“Give an account of thy stewardship, for thou mayest be no longer steward.”—ST. LUKE xvi. 2.

WE call this parable from which our text is taken the Parable of the Unjust Steward, and by that word we mean a fraudulent, dishonest steward, and such undoubtedly he did become. Before this parable closes we see this man deliberately cheating his lord, deliberately giving to his lord's debtors that which he knew they owed to him. But he did not become deliberately dishonest until the words I have read to you were spoken. Up to the time when his lord called him suddenly to account he had not been apparently a deliberately dishonest steward. He was accused to his lord that he had wasted his goods. Not a purposed and continued fraud was this man, in the first place, guilty of; but a long-continued careless faithlessness to his trust. He had forgotten, if he ever thought of or remembered it, that he was the trustee for his lord's possessions, and he had lived in carelessness of that trust, in easy self-indulgence, neglecting the plain duties of it until at last the goods began to perish, and then he is accused to his lord of having wasted his goods. This

* This was a farewell sermon preached on the occasion of leaving the Bishopric of Peterborough for the Archbishopric of York.

man was guilty of being unfaithful to his trust. It is this, brethren, that gives the parable its terrible significance for us. For there are not many, I trust, in this great congregation who, looking back upon their lives, can charge themselves with long-continued and deliberate sin against light and knowledge. There are not many such, we trust, at any time, or anywhere; but how many may there be who, looking back upon their past life at some critical moment, are driven to confess, "I have not been faithful to my lord, faithful to my trust. My lord's goods have not waxed, but waned in my trusteeship. I have been negligent, careless, and unfaithful, and so far, therefore, a dishonest steward."

Yes, brethren, this is the question which each one of us has to ask of himself, and of his own life—"What manner of steward have I been of those things that my Lord has entrusted to me?" God has given each one of us something to do in His household. I say each one of us, for surely there is not one of us who has not some stewardship in God's household given to him, be it large or be it small. Is there one here, is there one almost anywhere, who is so isolated, so helpless in his life, that in it he has no power of helping or serving others? My brethren, I say everyone of us is in a larger or smaller degree a steward of the Lord. Two great goods, two great gifts of God at least are given to everyone—one is Time, and the other is Opportunity. Time, that fleets so swiftly, and so often unheeded away—time that passes by moments and by days, and so runs up to years, and brings life to a close, is God's great trust to everyone of us. And Opportunity—those moments that every man's life brings to him, that are fraught with blessings and help or with hindrance and evil to his fellow-man, and which may become the means of increasing his

Master's goods or of diminishing them; those opportunities in life that come so often unrecognised, or that, although recognised, are allowed to pass by; this time which we waste and kill, these opportunities that we are so often disregarding and losing—these are the goods of our Lord, and every man has more or less of these and every man has to account for them. The ancients pictured Opportunity in the figure of a man covered with a forelock on the front of his head and bald behind. Grasp the forelock, seize the opportunity; if not, it passed by you, and you had nothing to lay hold of. Opportunity is bald behind! Yes, time that fleets and opportunity that passes never to return—these are the gifts and the stewardship of every one who hears me.

Brethren, we have to give an account sooner or later to our Lord and Master of how we have used these two great gifts, and many, ah, many another besides, but of these two surely every one of us has to give an account. Think for a moment of the many stewardships we all of us have from time to time given us, and how the stewardship is terminated, now at one time one stewardship and now at another time another. Is there a more precious stewardship than the stewardship of the parent of the child? The head of the family who is entrusted with that precious gift is entrusted with young hearts that, soft as wax to the touch of the parent's hand in early years, may grow harder as years go on. Does the time never come in the life of the parents when the stewardship is terminated, when the father or the mother looks down where the little one is laid to rest, and he hears the rattling of the clods upon the little coffin? That closes a stewardship, that turns and folds down a page in the parents' account; their stewardship here is ended, and if they have been unfaithful to this young heart, to this young soul, they

will have to answer for it to its Father in Heaven. If the life of the young one is spared and a son grows up into manhood or a daughter into womanhood, there comes a time, too, when that stewardship is ended. There comes a time when his father who has trained, or neglected to train, the son in the ways of righteousness and godliness sees that son a grown man, and no longer a tender-hearted and submissive child. A grown man for good or for evil looks him in the face, and his stewardship he feels is closed. Away from the mother's care a daughter is taken by another hand, and there rests upon that parent the question: Have I been faithful to my stewardship ere it was closed, and I may be no longer steward? The master, the employer, the statesman, the citizen who fills any place of trust, the pastor of his parish, all who have any charge, all who have any duties, all who have any power or influence, all these have some great trust of their Lord's to answer for.

If this be true of all men, if it be true of each one of you in your family and social relations, how far more deeply true is it of the minister and of the pastor—the man to whom has been committed the cure and the government of the souls of his parishioners for whom Christ died, the man who is a steward of the manifold mysteries of God! The good steward is bound, as all stewards are, to be faithful; is bound to labour for men's souls as one that must give an account. My brethren of the ministry, you who are here to-day, you surely know this. There is not one of you probably who has not experienced it in the changes of your ministries as you pass from one pastoral charge to another. As you left this parish and went to that, you must have felt that you were closing one stewardship even as you began another. And the pastor, if he be a conscientious and faithful

steward, must look back upon the years of his pastorate and ask himself: Have I done my full best for the goods of my Lord, or has there been by fault or carelessness of mine a waste of these goods? The thought comes back upon the conscientious pastor as he is leaving his flock: Have I given them their meat in due season; have I obeyed my Lord's command, “Feed my sheep; feed my lambs”; have I been faithful to rebuke where rebuke was needed; have I been wise and timely in counsel where counsel was required; have I been loving and tender and sympathetic in sorrow where sorrow needed such sympathy; have I been known more in the house of mourning than in the house of feasting; have I been diligent in my studies in God's Holy Word and in instructing His people; have I been fearless in rebuking vice; have I bound up the broken-hearted; have I set the prisoners and captives of the Evil One free in the Lord's name? Oh, if he has not kept his Lord's trust, and has to answer to Him for wasted time and wholly neglected opportunities, how awful must be his account! Even the best of men, the best and most conscientious of pastors, has some such moments as these, and if he looks back on his past life, is forced to the question: What account can I render to my Lord of my stewardship? Oh, thank God, brethren, that our merciful Lord, more merciful than man, is the master to judge us, not by what we have done, but by what we have striven to do.

And if the account of a single pastor as he passes from parish to parish be a grave and a serious, and even an awful thing to think of, what must be the account of the stewardship of him who passes from one diocese to another, as he looks back over years, as I do, many in number? As he looks back over a long episcopate there rise up before him the duties and the

responsibilities of his office, and he has to judge himself as one who has to give an account. He is not merely pastor, but *pastor pastorum*, the leader, the ruler, the guide, and so far as God may give him grace to be so, the example to the many pastors and the many flocks in his great diocese. How large the stewardship, how tremendous the responsibility of him who has to govern, of him who has to correct, to restrain, to stimulate, to encourage, to help, to advise, to sympathise, to rule, and also to guide and lead ; to be the very mainspring, if he may and can, of all good works that are being done all over his diocese ; to watch for occasions of helping those who are striving to serve their Lord ; to know and to recognise, if he can and may, the work of every individual pastor ; to look upon the busy toiler in our great towns, amongst the great masses whom God, in His mysterious providence, is bringing thicker and thicker round about the doors of our Church ; to think of and to pray for the pastor in some far-away and isolated country parish, leading, as he thinks, his unnoticed and unregarded life of labour ; to be the first to originate, if he may be given the wisdom to do so, some new work for God in his diocese, or thankfully to accept and gratefully to acknowledge the suggestion of some faithful pastor for some new work ; to be the centre of unity, drawing together, if he can, all brother pastors in one band of fellow-workers ; checking party spirit ; refusing to be the Bishop of this or that faction, and bringing, if he may, all together as brothers in unity ; to be faithful to the laity of his diocese, not fearing the frowns of some, nor caring to win the smiles of others, and remembering that God in His providence has given him a great place that he need not fear the one, nor too slavishly seek the other ; then to take his place in the senate, and there to speak some words, if

God may give him wisdom to do so, for his Church and Lord; then so to feed his own mind and soul in study of God's Word, and of books of good and holy men, that he may go throughout his diocese and preach to his people, not merely empty and vapid words of declamation, but words that come out of the deeper thoughts and deeper emotions of his own mind and heart! All these a Bishop is to be. He is to be the pastor of pastors, the ruler and governor, and yet the servant of servants amongst his brethren, if he would rightly discharge the office of a Bishop. He that desires the office of a Bishop, we are told, desires a good thing, but what is more, he desires, if he has the courage to desire it, a very great and a very hard thing. He is set in a high place, a mark of observation, it may be for misconstruction and calumny. Those who are placed in high places are placed in slippery places, and if their feet slip then there is rejoicing in the camp of the ungodly. If the standard-bearer falls those who are gathered together in the hosts of evil against the Lord shout with triumph. Very great and wearisomely heavy at times is the charge that rests upon him who is called to the office and work of a Bishop. And there comes a time to such an one, either at the close of his life, or as it is with me, in some strangely unexpected moment of his life, the message, “Here thou mayest be no longer steward; this charge is passing from thy hands, and is being given to another; what account hast thou to give to the Lord Who made thee steward?” The greatest, the wisest, the holiest man who was ever consecrated to the office of a Bishop might well shrink and tremble as he looked back over twenty-two years of his episcopate, and ask, “Have I wasted my Lord's goods; have I at any rate, done my best that they should not be wasted; have I striven faithfully, honestly, truly, to the best of my

knowledge and ability, and with care that my knowledge and ability may be increased—have I striven to be the faithful steward of the manifold mysteries of God?"

If I may, although reluctantly as we always should speak of ourselves, if I may in this my last, this my farewell sermon speak of myself, I say this: That as I look back over those twenty-two years, they are as a mist that rolls away, and I see before me now the scene when I stood and looked for the first time as a Bishop, on the day of my enthronement, upon the long ranks and upturned faces of the pastors of this diocese and the laity of this town, and said to myself, "These are to be my fellow-workers in the time to come for the Lord; God grant me grace to be faithful to my high office; God grant me grace to be a true steward of His mysteries amongst them." I do remember—it comes back to me as I speak—how at that moment I said how vain and useless it would be for me to talk then and there of plans that might never be carried out, hopes that might never be accomplished. All I could ask for was prayer that something of what I desired and aimed at might be given to me for the sake of others, and that God might give me grace to finish my course here with joy. Looking back over those twenty-two years it is no affectation of humility to say, what every honest man must say, who looks back on twenty-two years of his life and sees how many failures, how much time lost, how many opportunities wasted—"God be merciful to me a sinner." The man who can look back upon twenty-two years of his life and not find reason to pray for mercy and forgiveness must be strangely ignorant, strangely unthoughtful of the duties and responsibilities of life. But then I should be untrue to and should be unjust to those many fellow-labourers who have wrought with me during the burden

and heat of these twenty-two years—so many of whom have passed to their rest and to their account after faithful, noble, and self-denying labours—I should be unjust to them, I should be untrue and unjust, if I may dare to say so, to my Lord and Master—if I did not acknowledge with a thankful heart that He has given us in this diocese to see not so much of what I have done as of what others have helped me to do, much work for Him, for which we may be thankful.

How many churches have I seen in my episcopate restored from squalor and unfitness for their glorious service to beautiful temples, from the smallest of the parish churches at whose restoration I may have preached, to this glorious temple of ours, in which I recently addressed another such large congregation as that I see before me! The work of church restoration has gone on nobly and largely in this diocese; and, more than this, the work of church extension, for which so many have laboured—and for which I will dare to say I have striven and planned and prayed—in our great towns, amidst the gathering masses of the people, has also gone on in like manner. The Church has been lengthening her cords and strengthening her stakes, and stretching out a loving hand, which has been lovingly and willingly grasped by those who are coming more and more to see that the Church acknowledges and publicly acts upon the acknowledgment that the masses—that the souls of the masses—are the wealth and catholic heritage of the Church of Christ. In our schools also how thankful have I been to see the great work of the education of the people rising year after year to a higher level, more carefully thought out and wrought out. Not only is secular instruction improving, but the religious instruction for which we really care, and for which these schools were really

founded, is carefully thought of. I have seen new institutions, new means of helping the clergy in their work, the stirring work of our mission clergy, in the duller, calmer, and somewhat stagnant life at times of country parishes; I have seen confirmations grow in reverence and earnestness, and, as I have watched them year after year—and I have laid hands on more than 60,000 confirmees—I have seen reason to thank God for very careful teaching and for very reverent bringing to that holy rite. I have seen communions in churches where they were once infrequent and rare become frequent and devout. All over the diocese I have seen, and I thank God that I have seen it, and I should be unjust to those whose labour this has been if I did not testify among you this day that I have seen a steadily rising and spreading tide of Church life, for which I have again and again thanked God, and taken courage. And then I can testify, and I am thankful to be able to do it, that very, very rarely have I seen any going back or ebbing of that tide. Very rarely in my experience has the good pastor been succeeded by a careless or unfaithful one, but very often in my experience has the less careful been succeeded by the more careful steward of the mysteries of God. Yes, the tide of Church life, the standard of Church work is distinctly rising here as it is rising all over England. The clergy are more conscious of the great work and task they have to do; the laity know better what is required of their pastors, while they are recognising their duty to help and work with the clergy. The right hand of the Church has been stretched out vigorously in years gone by, but the left hand is now being freed from the pedantic bondage that forbade with a jealous nervousness the co-operation of the laity, and they are beginning largely and freely to help us, not merely with their money, which in

times past was thought the only help a layman could give, but with time and thought, with effort, with evangelistic striving and working together with the pastor in the parish, and in the councils of the Church. All this God has given me to see, and I thank God that it has been so. And most deeply thankful am I to those whose labours, whose efficient, earnest, self-denying, precious labours, have helped to bring this about. Surely the Lord is in the midst of us; surely there is a blessing still to be found in this dear old Church of ours, and the Lord's presence is manifesting itself among us more and more day by day.

I have to thank those who have helped me in this great work of ours so loyally, so trustfully, so generously, so earnestly. I thank my many fellow-labourers all over this diocese. I thank those who have shared with me in the government and control, as well as the labours of this diocese. Never was there one in high place amongst others more kindly, more generously, more trustfully treated by those over whom he was called to rule; and as I think of all the clergy and the laity have been to me, I thank them from the bottom of my heart for all they have been and all they have done. But I am bound to do one thing more, and to say that if amongst all these many pastors there be one—I trust there are not many; nay, I am bold and dare to say I believe there are not many—who can say of me that I ever gave him just cause of offence by word or deed, then of that man I entreat his pardon, and ask him to believe that the offence was at least unintentionally given; but on the other hand if there be those amongst my dear brethren of the clergy and amongst my brethren of the laity whom any word of mine has stirred to a nobler or a higher life, or helped in bearing the cares and sorrows of this life; if there be

any pastor in our great towns who has had encouragement and help from his Bishop; if there be any pastor in some quiet parish who has sought the counsel and the best advice of his Bishop, and who has had from him the best he could give, then I do entreat of all such their prayers that I may acquit myself as a faithful steward in that larger stewardship to which I have been so suddenly, so wholly unexpectedly called. That call coming as it did, as I have said, altogether unsought, unlooked for, undreamed of, I cannot but regard as a call from the Master to larger work in His vineyard, and I have obeyed it, not without misgiving, not without an anxious and deep sense of all the solemn responsibilities that it involves, but with at least this strength and comfort gathered out of my twenty-two years of labour amongst you—that I do believe that whatever may be the errors, whatever may be the offences of one who laboured to the best of his knowledge honestly and faithfully amongst his people, they will at least recognise that he has endeavoured honestly and faithfully to serve them, and that they will forgive the fault and defect, and that they will own and recognise the honesty of the motive and earnestness of the desire, and that they will win for him by their prayers some larger power to help him to serve them.

I know what the kindness—nay, I dare to say—I will say it—I know what the love of the clergy of this diocese—many of them—has been to me; and however unworthily I have been your pastor for so many years, I cannot forget—to the latest moment of my life I never can forget, burnt into my memory as it has been—how some years ago in those hours that seemed to be the last of my stewardship, the loving message of sympathy, the tender words of kindness that reached those ministering around my bedside, nerved and

strengthened them for the weary and anxious task that lay upon them. Never can I forget the kind and cheering reception that I met with from clergy and laity as I came back by God's great mercy to minister amongst them. And now a less sad and for me a less awful parting has come, and I do believe, I do trust that I bear away with me to the great place and office to which I have been called the sympathy and regard of the clergy and laity of the diocese, and that they will give me at least their earnest prayers—prayers for me, and still more prayers for the Church of Christ in which I have been called to bear so high, so anxious, so responsible, so difficult a trust and stewardship. Brethren, in the Lord, and for Christ's sake, I bid you all farewell. The Lord forbid that I should ever cease to pray for you. God grant that you may always give to me a place in your memory and in your prayers.

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